



OUTLOOK 2012

INDUSTRY FORECASTS AND CHARTS
FOR NORTHCENTRAL MONTANA



ECONOMY:

How does Great Falls measure up against other cities around the region?



ENERGY:

Development and strong ag prices fueling the area



BUSINESS:

Downtown Great Falls gaining vibrancy



MILITARY:

New mission



MEDICAL:

Sector preparing for healthcare changes



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From left to right: OB/GYN Dr. Sandra Bailey and Dr. Daren Braget; Urologists Dr. Mark Seal and Dr. Brian Malloy.



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HOW GREAT FALLS STACKS UP

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SECTION STAFF

Section editor **Jo Dee Black**

Reporters **Peter Johnson, Erin Madison**

Photographers **Larry Beckner, Rion Sanders**

Section designer **Také Uda**

Cover design **Nick Daniels**

For news content information, contact section editor Jo Dee Black at 791-6502;
 for advertising information, contact Carri Gregory at 791-1453.

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TOP STORY



Great Falls' 10th Avenue South remains one of the busiest roads in the state. TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO/LARRY BECKNER

How Great Falls stacks up

Development Authority comparing Electric City with similar communities around the region



Brett Doney

By PETER JOHNSON

Tribune Staff Writer

Even when an economic development agency is plugging away and making solid improvements, it makes sense to check how other communities and economic development agencies are doing.

That's what Great Falls Economic Development Authority President Brett Doney decided last May when he created a benchmark grouping of 11 communities in the Northwest of about the same size as Great

Falls by which to compare and contrast progress being made.

He chose communities of up to 90,000 that aren't bedroom communities to major cities such as Denver, Salt Lake City or Seattle, whose dominance could overshadow them.

Each time a think tank or development group comes out with an index measuring and ranking economic growth among U.S. cities, Doney plans to see how Great Falls ranks compared with the other benchmark regional cities.

The evaluating groups have dif-

fering ideas about what's key to economic development and use different sets of statistics to come up with rankings, Doney said. But the plan is to get a general idea how Great Falls is faring.

For instance, Great Falls ranked 48th overall among 243 small U.S. metro areas — and fourth among the 12 regional benchmark cities — in NewGeography's May ranking of job-creation efforts.

Great Falls fared better than such economic dynamos as Billings and Rapid City, S.D., in that >>

ELEVEN SIMILAR CITIES AROUND THE REGION



Billings



Bismarck



Casper



Coeur d'Alene



Grand Forks



Grand Junction



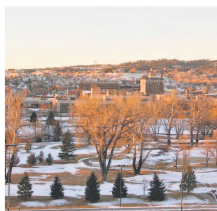
Idaho Falls



Logan



Missoula



Rapid City



Yakima

► particular index.

But the Electric City did not do as well in Policom's Economic Strength Rating late last year, which analyzes dozens of personal earnings, small-business income flow and government dependence statistics.

Great Falls ranked 173rd out of 366 metro areas — and 8th among 12 benchmark cities on that one.

However, Great Falls has climbed steadily from 308th place in Policom's 2006 ranking to 173rd last year — an impressive jump.

Based on a consultant's diversification report a few years ago, the GFDA is working for sustained, healthy growth and higher wage opportunities. It's recruiting to the community's strengths, including energy development and agricultural processing and addressing a weakness by building a construction-ready, heavy industrial park with rail access.

Here's a look at how the economy has fared recently in a few of the other benchmark cities and what their economic development leaders are zeroing in on.

Bismarck, N.D., has one of the lowest unemployment rates and highest median household incomes among the 12 northwestern cities. (See chart)

"The strength of our economy has always been our diversity," said Brian Ritter, director of business development with the Bismarck-Mandan Development Association. "We're not a military town, not a university town and not dependent on one particular industry."

Rather, he said, Bismarck's economy is being driven by three sectors: medical, state government

SIDE BY SIDE			'00 to '10 POPULATION CHANGE	JOBLESS RATE 11/11	JOBLESS RATE CHANGE FROM 1/11	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2010
CITY	2010 POP.	2000 POP.				
Grand Junction, Colo.	58,566	41,986	39.5%	11.9%	-3.4%	\$48,417
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho	44,137	34,514	27.9%	13.3%	-3.5%	38,496
Idaho Falls, Idaho	56,813	50,730	9.2%	8.6%	-1.6%	46,161
Billings	104,170	89,847	15.9%	6.4%	-1.7%	46,433
Great Falls	58,505	56,690	3.2%	7.5%	-1.9%	40,935
Missoula	66,788	57,053	17.1%	8.7%	-1.8%	36,547
Bismarck, N.D.	61,272	55,532	6.4%	4.7%	-1.9%	47,560
Grand Forks, N.D.	52,838	49,321	7.1%	4.7%	-0.6%	40,352
Rapid City, S.D.	67,956	59,607	14.0%	5.6%	-1.5%	44,099
Logan, Utah	48,174	42,670	12.9%	6.2%	-2.3%	35,580
Yakima, Wash.	91,067	71,845	26.8%	11.6%	-2.0%	39,706
Casper, Wyo.	55,316	49,644	7.2%	7.5%	-1.9%	49,801

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR AND STATISTICS

TRIBUNE GRAPHIC/NICK DANIELS

and energy development, including coal, wind energy, an oil refinery and professional offices related to the Williston oil field development 220 miles away.

The development group is aiding the town's two hospitals in recruitment specialists needed to make the town "the best medical center between Minneapolis and Seattle."

The year end unemployment rate of 11.6 percent for Yakima, Wash., is somewhat misleading, said Dave McFadden, president of the Yakima County Development Association.

The south-central Washington community is highly dependent on agriculture as diverse as apples, peaches, cherries and other fruit, wine production, mint and dairy and beef cattle, he said.

"Our unemployment rate has ranged from 8 to 12 percent for several years, and is highly season-

al, with harvesting done by late in the year and farm workers taking a breather," McFadden said.

"We're not smacking a lot of home runs, but agriculture is strong and Yakima is doing fairly well," he added.

There's quite a bit of fruit processing and distribution in Yakima, a city that also serves as a medical, retail and services center.

Yakima also is centrally located with excellent interstate highway and rail connections and looking to build on its role as a warehousing and distribution center for big companies such as Walmart and Ace Hardware.

Billings was featured on national media such as National Public Radio as one of the nation's economic hot spots in part because of its proximity to the booming oil development in the Williston Basin

area of northeastern Montana and northwestern North Dakota.

"We've really seen an economic turnaround and lowered unemployment in the last couple of years, though we never had a huge economic decline," said Jeremy Vannatta, business recruitment director for Big Sky Economic Development in Billings.

"We continue to see small businesses grow, but our real strength has been in energy development and manufacturing."

Manufacturing companies from Canada and Texas recently set up business in Billings making equipment that will be shipped respectively to the oil sand fields development in northern Alberta and the Bakken formation in the Williston and Sidney area, he said.

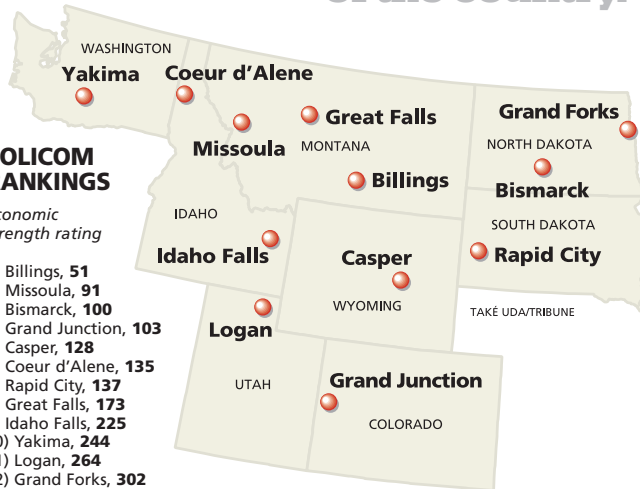
The work environment is so challenging in the oil boom area ►►

"All in all, folks are better in Missoula and all of Montana than they are in many parts of the country."

POLICOM RANKINGS

Economic strength rating

- 1) Billings, 51
- 2) Missoula, 91
- 3) Bismarck, 100
- 4) Grand Junction, 103
- 5) Casper, 128
- 6) Coeur d'Alene, 135
- 7) Rapid City, 137
- 8) Great Falls, 173
- 9) Idaho Falls, 225
- 10) Yakima, 244
- 11) Logan, 264
- 12) Grand Forks, 302



► that a few major energy companies have placed their business offices in Billings and several families have purchased homes there, with workers commuting to the oil fields.

Billings also is a finalist for a company seeking to build a 200,000-square-foot factory and another building a major distribution center, Vannatta said.

"We're becoming a regional hub for energy and manufacturing."



Engen

Missoula had a tough time during the recession with the loss of 400 good paying industrial jobs when Smurfit-Stone Container closed its Frenchtown pulp mill following earlier plant closings, said Missoula Mayor John Engen. The closing of the large downtown Macy's department store also stung.

But, though unemployment and underemployment are larger than desired, the city has held its own, he said. Real estate values have generally held up and city government has maintained services with some surgical cuts.

"All in all, folks are better in Missoula and all of Montana than they are in many parts of the country," he said.

"In wake of the bad news, we

came to a community realization that we needed to be more strategic and thoughtful about economic development," Engen said.

"We had a bunch of folks and agencies working on bits and pieces of economic development, but not necessarily working together toward common goals."

A new public-private group, the Missoula Economic Partnership, has set goals for job retention, capital investment and strategic industries to pursue, he said.

Rather than promising huge tax breaks and grants to national companies, they'll include looking to grow local companies or recruit others that are "best fit," meaning they can appreciate and build on Missoula's strengths, including the university and well trained workforce, and its amenities, including parks, rivers, trails and open space. Missoula also has reviewed, improved and streamlined its zoning and project approval process, he said.

"Lots of things are in the works," Engen said, including a local company that's adding 25 jobs for corporate data analysis and consideration of expansion into pharmaceutical research and sophisticated "back shop" business support functions.

"We're looking to grow through businesses that offer 5, 10, 20 or 40 jobs, not several hundred at one shot," he said. ■

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CITY-CENTER DEVELOPMENTS



An architect's rendering shows the planned Pacific Steel and Recycling building near Electric City Water Park in downtown Great Falls.

Looking up downtown



The law firm Church, Harris, Johnson & Williams, P.C. plans to renovate the Baum-Trinastich building on 3rd Street South in Great Falls. TRIBUNE PHOTO/TAKÉ UDA

New building, renovations, expansions in the works

By ERIN MADISON
Tribune Staff Writer

When the law firm Church, Harris, Johnson & Williams, P.C. first considered moving to a new office, the partners never considered leaving downtown.

"We've been downtown for our entire existence, which is 65-plus years," said Scott Rubino, administrator for the firm.

The law office has been located in the downtown Wells Fargo Bank building for more than 60 years. With that lease coming due, some of the firm's partners and employees decided to look into buying a building.

"The interest rates are so good right now," Rubino said. "Real estate is at a good price ... It was just kind of really good timing for us."

The group recently purchased the historic Baum-Trinastich building, located at 114 3rd St. S., recognizable for the Owl Cigar advertisement on its side.

The new owners, Rubino, Ron Nelson, Mike Talia, Karen Reiff and Mac Smith, are currently in the process of applying for historic tax credits to use on the

building's renovation and rehabilitation.

Rubino hopes work can start on the building in March and be complete in October, at which point the firm will move into the building.

"It's the perfect size for us," Rubino said. "It fits us just right."

Activity downtown

Church, Harris, Johnson & Williams isn't the only business to be making investments in downtown Great Falls. Several projects are planned this coming year for the business district.

"There's a lot going on downtown," said Joan Redeen, of the Great Falls Business Improvement District.

Public Drug opened in its new building in November; Pacific Steel and Recycling announced plans to build a new building near the Electric City Water Park; Bennett Motors plans to move its import business downtown from 10th Avenue South; and renovation work is expected to begin this year on the Rocky Mountain Building, which has been shuttered since it was devastated by fire in 2009.

Pacific Steel and Recycling plans to renovate and relocate its headquarters to the old Heisey Grocery building, now occupied by Big Sky Transfer and Storage, located near the Electric City Water Park.

Architect Steve L'Heureux told the Tribune it's the biggest project to hit downtown in the 33 years he has practiced >>>



Rubino



L'Heureux



The downtown Greystone Inn boasts renovated rooms. TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO/ RION SANDERS



Public Drug built their new building on the corner of Third Street and Central Avenue. TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO/LARRY BECKNER



Mauri Novak is remodeling the Cory Block Apartments above the Subway sandwich shop in the 400 block of Central. TRIBUNE PHOTO/LARRY BECKNER

► in Great Falls.

"It's the last piece of this whole area that hasn't been touched," he said previously, adding that he believes the project will greatly improve the area.

Public Drug's historic location at the corner of 6th Street and Central Avenue was destroyed in the 2009 Rocky Mountain Building fire. Since then, the independently owned pharmacy operated out of store front on the Davidson Plaza. Public Drug re-opened in a new, one-story building at 324 Central Ave. in November. That lot had been vacant since a 2006 fire destroyed the building that last housed B&B Loan & Rental.

The Greystone Inn, 621 Central Ave., recently completed an interior renovation and will begin exterior work this spring.

Plans are also moving forward to begin renovation on the Rocky Mountain Building, owned by Set Free Ministries.

Renovation plans require \$200,000 to be contributed up front to pay for construction interest during renovations. A \$100,000 anonymous donation gave the project a big boost, putting Set Free Ministries within \$70,000 of the required initial payment. The project also would be assisted by federal tax credits for historic properties.

"The Rocky Mountain Building should start sometime this year," Redeen said. "We're all keeping our fingers crossed."

Historic tax credits are a mechanism to bring in a little additional money to help bring old buildings back to life, said Wendy Thomas, of the city of Great Falls Planning and Community Development Department.

Thomas recently has seen much more interest from the community in historic preservation tax credits.

"This project will show how effective new market and historic tax credits can be in getting a project done," Thomas said previously of the Rocky Mountain Building.

Bennett Motors is carrying on with plans to move its import auto business from 10th Avenue South to downtown Great Falls, consolidating all of its dealerships in one location.

But actual construction of new showrooms probably won't start until next year, with the move scheduled for the early fall of 2013, said Cari Yturri, president and general manager of the longtime, fami-

ly owned car dealership.

Apartments and condos

Downtown is seeing numerous new apartment and condo projects, said Redeen of the BID.

Having residents living downtown is an important piece to creating a vibrant downtown, she said.

"If we have residents downtown, that will encourage our businesses and restaurant to stay open later," she said.

Mauri Novak is working to remodel eight spacious one-bedroom apartments above the downtown Subway.

"This building was originally an old hotel on the second floor," he said.

Sometime around 1950, someone bricked in the windows on the second floor and tore out the stairway.

"Nobody had been up here for 60 years," Novak said.

Novak had long thought about eventually adding either apartments or office space upstairs. He remodeled the building's main floor a few years ago and put in a stairwell.

He ultimately decided on apartments because of the strong market for rental housing. He hopes to have the apartments completed by April.

The owner of the Margret Building, located between Kaufman's Menswear and the Blue Rose in the 400 block of Central, is also working to develop upper-level apartments, Redeen said.

The Montana Building, at 1st Avenue North and 5th Street, was recently converted into condos, some of which have already sold with others still on the market. Crooked Tree Coffee + Cakes opened on the ground floor of that building in July.

The developer's original hope was that the ground-floor businesses would offer conveniences for the upper-floor residents.

Master plan

The city of Great Falls recently adopted a downtown master plan, a blueprint for future development, outlining strategies for downtown.

The master plan will help the various nonprofits that aim to boost downtown work together.

"It creates a coordinated effort among a lot of different entities," said Martin Fleck, community relations director for the Downtown Great Falls Association.

From the master plan, downtown leaders have set three goals to accomplish in 100 days.

The first goal, which was ►►

➤ set to be completed by Feb. 9, was to identify priority entrances to downtown, Redeen said. A future step will be to build gateways and way-finding signs at those entrances to help lead people to downtown.

The second goal, to be completed by March 10, is to attract more people downtown during Western Art Week.



Fleck

The third goal, which Redeen hopes to have completed, weather permitting, by April 19, is a new mural for the First Avenue North underpass.

"That one will be huge and very visible," she said.

The master plan also calls for the creation of a tax increment financing district and a Downtown Development Partnership that will decide how to use the TIF funds.

"We are in the process of formalizing the Downtown Development Partnership," Redeen said.

That partnership will then be tasked with implementing the goals from the master plan.

"It's going to be a great year for downtown," Fleck said. ■

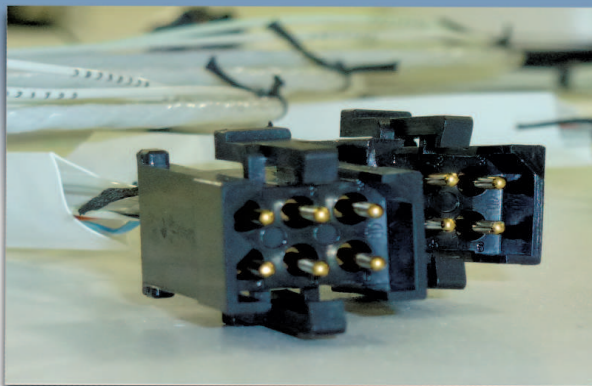


Downtown advocates are working to put a new master plan for the area into action. FILE PHOTO

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COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Hopes rising for 2012

'We're off to a good start but don't have nearly enough projects yet'

By **PETER JOHNSON**
Tribune Staff Writer

Commercial construction rebounded in Great Falls in 2011, and builders and economic development officials hope 2012 will be a solid year, too.

"2011 was definitely a good construction year compared to the year before," said city Planning and Community Development Director Mike Haynes.

Building permits were obtained last year for \$44.8 million in new commercial buildings, foundations, additions and repairs — three times the total for 2010.

He stressed that annual building permit data can give a misleading snapshot, since a permit for a large project can be sought late in one year, with the work spread over the next two years.

In fact, commercial construction in Great Falls has remained fairly steady over the past six years, ranging between \$43.4 million to \$54.9 million, in every year except two.

The total for commercial projects was \$91.8 million in 2007, a figure greatly boosted when Benefis Health System took out a building permit in December for the multi-year, \$54 million, seven-story patient tower.

And 2010 was a decided off-year "when there simply were few big projects started," Haynes said.

Another major project by the hospital led the way in 2011, an \$11 million building permit for the Benefis Medical Professional Building. (City numbers reflect the building's cost, but do not cover land, specialized equipment and furnishings. Benefis puts the building's full cost at \$17 million.)

"We had a good mix of other projects in 2011, including a dozen with building permits of \$800,000, or greater," he said.

They included visible buildings already in use, such as Public Drug's downtown building, Jerry Noble Tire's new service building and the Peak health club's expanded facility and youth pool.



Jeff Jacobson of Sletten Construction builds a metal wall for Thomas Dean & Hoskins, Inc., a consulting engineering firm under construction on River Drive North.
TRIBUNE PHOTO/LARRY BECKNER

Other 2011 projects are nearly done, such as Contract Flooring's showy new building and Pacific Cataract & Laser Institute's larger Market Place home. Construction workers were taking advantage of the mild early winter to plug away on the new River Drive North office

of the Thomas Dean and Hoskins engineering firm.

Haynes, Great Falls Development Authority President Brett Doney and two contractors see early signs that 2012 can be a good construction year.

"We're hopeful for a solid 2012,"

Haynes said.

"We've got at least three major projects that developers expect to start soon," he said, "and believe more are being considered."

He spoke about the Grandview at Benefis, a huge two-phase senior living project, major renovation of a historic downtown building into the headquarters for Pacific Steel and Recycling, and significant construction changes at the Great Falls airport terminal.

Besides those projects, Doney mentioned "some pretty exciting retail developers considering Great Falls" that haven't decided yet, the Staggering Ox restaurant that opened in the building where the Breaks was and possible commercial development.

The GFDA will hire contractors to extend water lines to its Agri-Park Industrial Park south of Giant Springs and, if the city approves industrial zoning, Doney hopes a few businesses will move in later this year.

In addition, Cascade County will finish up improvements to Black Eagle Road to better serve commercial developments near the malting plant, he said.

"We're off to a good start but don't have nearly enough projects yet," Doney said. "There are a number of business folks still considering projects. We hope a few more will go to construction."

And, Doney noted, construction of the Montana Alberta Tie Line, the transmission line between Great Falls and Lethbridge, is expected to spur more area wind farms, including NaturEner USA's Rim Rock project northwest of Shelby.

Northwestern Energy and Compass Wind are proposing the Spion Kop wind farm near Raynesford, he added, while Laurne Engineers and Constructors wants to build a plant in Bynum to assemble modular components to be shipped to oil processing facilities in Canada.

That nearby development helps create jobs and demand for Great Falls services, Doney said.

Contractor Brad Talcott, ➤➤

► president of James Talcott Construction, said he expects "business to firm up in the Great Falls area in 2012, doing better than last year."

"Great Falls area construction isn't as booming as eastern Montana, which benefits from strong oil development," he said.

"But Great Falls has had average employment growth," he said. "We didn't see the huge growth of some boom areas of Montana, but also missed the busts they've had. Major contributors to the local economy are hydro and wind power construction, energy transmission lines, and medical, agriculture and the military."

There will be less spending on new military projects this year, as the federal government trims its budget, he said, but Montana government is strong, with a budget surplus, which could lead to more state projects.

Talcott said his company will complete on-going projects at Malmstrom and elsewhere, including a possible office and retail building to the south of his Staybridge Suites hotel.

Mark Visocan, a Sletten Construction vice president and building manager of the regional company's northern division, was bullish about the local economy.

"Things started slow last year in our Montana division, but by late summer they really picked up," he said. "It's nothing like we did three or four years ago when we were working on the Benefis Tower. But we're doing better than our Nevada and Arizona divisions, where construction projects are down significantly."

Visocan said Sletten crews were able to pour concrete slabs during surprisingly mild early January weather for the Cascade Ridge Senior Living apartment development that Benefis is building for low-income residents. The company also is working on the Thomas Dean and Hoskins engineering building and expects to start foundation work in spring at the Grandview at Benefis retirement community. ■



An architect's rendering shows The Grandview Commons, the entry to The Grandview at Benefis continuing-care retirement community. Benefis broke ground on phase I of the project last summer. Phase II, independent-living homes and apartments, is scheduled to begin in late 2012 or early 2013.

COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Top Great Falls projects

By **PETER JOHNSON**
Tribune Staff Writer

Here are details about some bigger Great Falls potential commercial developments:

» Benefis Health System, the hospital and medical center that's been on a multi-year facility improvement plan, again leads the way in 2012.

Benefis had a ceremonial ground-breaking last fall for the first phase of its \$67 million Grandview at Benefis continuing-care retirement community. Contractors expect to start foundation work early this spring.

The project will allow residents to move seamlessly from independent living to various levels of care as they age.

The first phase, estimated at \$28 million and set to be done in mid-2013, will include 48 assisted living apartments, 16 memory support apartments and three skilled nursing cottages. Construction on the second phase could start late this year or early next and be done by late 2014. The \$39 million project is for 77 independent-living apartments and 15 free-standing homes.

The Grandview at Benefis is expected to create 75 full- and part-time jobs, adding to the 2,600-

plus other workers that Benefis employs. Built on 42 acres a quarter mile south of the Benefis East Campus, the facility will include a fitness center, hobby room, pub, library, dining options and walking paths.

» In addition, contractors are developing the \$4 million, 40-unit Cascade Ridge Senior Living housing complex for Benefis and partner Mountain Plains Equity Group on a 3-acre site east of the Benefis East on 29th Street South. Designed for low- and moderate-income seniors, the project is slated for completion this fall.

The hospital's multi-year ►►

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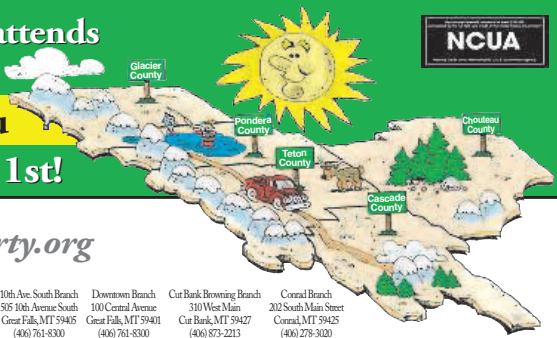
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Montana Refining Co., back, is converting part of the former Westgate Mall property into industrial storage space. FILE PHOTO

► facility improvement plan has included the surgery tower, in 2004; the Benefis Sletten Cancer Institute, 2006; the South Tower, 2009, and Orthopedic Center of Montana, 2010.

Benefis officials stress they've been able to improve the region's health facilities while remaining a low-cost hospital by using long-term, tax-exempt bond financing.

"We're committed to keeping the cost of health care down, while providing the highest quality and continuing to recruit and retain top medical talent," said Benefis

CEO John Goodnow.

» Major renovation is expected to begin this spring and be done next summer on a large brick, 1913-era building between Electric City Water Park and the Civic Center that Pacific Steel and Recycling is converting to its new headquarters building.

"We needed more space for our corporate office, which we expect to grow from 40 to 60 employees in five years and were running out of room at 1401 3rd St NW," said company vice president Ed Leppien. "We operate in several

states but want to keep our headquarters here because we like what Great Falls has to offer our employees."

"In turn we are contributing to Great Falls and the downtown by renovating a historic structure. We think building near the downtown will offer our employees an opportunity to shop, eat and use the River's Edge Trail."

The company is having the original brick Heisey Grocery building, most recently used by Big Sky Transfer and Storage, converted to a three-story office

building. It also traded land south of the police station to the city for the former Yaw Kinney lumber building near the Heisey building, which will be converted to training space and cold storage.

Pacific plans to move its steel and recycling divisions from two other locations to the proposed Great Falls AgriTech industrial park northeast of Great Falls.

» Montana Refining Co. is converting part of the former Westgate Mall property that it purchased late last year from a Seattle-area company to industrial, storage space, said Dexter Busby, director of government affairs.

Most mall tenants were required to move last spring, but one remaining tenant, It'll Do Bar, has been permitted to stay. It plans to move soon to the former Pin N Cue bowling building, which is being renovated at 1800 3rd St. N.W.

"We're still evaluating other potential plans for the property," Busby said. "It's a big piece of property, 23.5 acres, that's between the refinery and mall and can serve as a good buffer."

In the short term, refinery officials plan to use the west side of the mall, where a Buttrey grocery once was, to store large quantities of an asphalt additive that needs to keep out of the weather, he said.

First, Montana Refining is having a local contractor and an environmental engineering firm remove asbestos, which was considered a durable floor tile when the mall was built, Busby said. The company also will need to tear down the walls for smaller shops and bring the electrical wiring up to code if it does more with the mall building.

With more storage room close to the refinery, the company will close a large warehouse it has downtown and reduce truck traffic off bridges, Busby said. ■

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The Montana Air National Guard will get a wing of eight C-130 Hercules cargo planes to replace its current F-15 fighter jet mission as soon as late 2013. COURTESY PHOTO

MONTANA MILITARY

Uncertainty in the air

**Confidence high for Malmstrom and MANG,
but national budget woes could hit home**

By **PETER JOHNSON**
Tribune Staff Writer

Business supporters of Great Falls' two military facilities are fairly confident about the future of both Malmstrom Air Force Base and the Montana Air National Guard.

But they stress there is some uncertainty for all military programs because of expected long-range, major cuts in defense spending.

"We feel good about Great Falls

retaining its missile mission at Malmstrom and about the Air National Guard staying roughly the same size and retaining a flying mission," said Steve Malicott, president of the Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce. "But long-range defense spending cuts could start in the next year that will create new



Malicott

unpredictable variables."

MANG's role changing

The Defense Department confirmed in early February that the Montana Air National Guard will get a new wing of eight large C-130 cargo/transport planes to replace its current F-15 fighter jet mission starting in as soon as late 2013.

MANG's F-15s are scheduled to be transferred to the California Air National Guard in Fresno starting in August and finishing in March

2013. Tentatively that's expected to give MANG six months transition before it starts to receive the large, four-engine, five crew cargo planes in the fall of 2013.

MANG's 120th Fighter Wing is expected to be assigned about the same number of personnel — about 1,100 airmen including 350 full-time — to fly and maintain C-130s as it does flying F-15s, although firm numbers still await manning decisions that could be impacted by budget cuts.

Converting MANG's facili- ➤➤

► ties on Gore Hill to the much larger plane is expected to cost \$15 million to \$17 million, good construction work for the community, said businessman David Weissman, chairman of the Central Montana



Weissman

Defense Alliance.

And MANG has guardsmen from 54 of Montana's 56 counties, he added.

"We're excited that our airport partner will get an enduring and important mission," said Great Falls

Airport Director John Faulkner.

Under a long-time agreement, MANG leases 140 acres from the airport with full access to runways for \$1 a year, he said. In return MANG provides the airport with firefighting crews and capability valued at \$1.25 million and conducts daily runway checks.

The four-engine plane is 97 feet, nine inches long, nearly the length of a football field. It is 38 feet, 10 inches tall with a 132 feet, 7 inch wingspan. It can reach a speed of 366 mph at 20,000 feet altitude, and carry a normal payload of up to 36,500 pounds for a range of 1,200 miles.

In contrast, MANG pilots now fly the F-15, a twin-engine tactical fighter jet that's 64 feet long, 18.5 feet high, with a wing spa of 42.8 feet. Its maximum speed is 1,875 mph.

MANG's 120th Fighter Wing is assigned 19 F-15s, with crews assigned to fly some on air combat alert flights out of Hawaii.

Single pilots fly F-15s, but it takes a crew of five or six to staff the C-130, including two pilots, a navigator, a flight engineer, a crew chief and at times a load master.

Brett Doney, president of the Great Falls Development Authority, said retaining a flying mission greatly benefits the Great Falls airport, since the Guard provides fire fighting crews there.

Malmstrom role fairly firm

Malmstrom's main mission is operating, maintaining and protecting silo-based intercontinental ballistic missiles. Malmstrom is one of three ICBMs bases with 150 missiles apiece.

The land-based nuclear missiles, together with submarine- and bomber-based missiles, form the nation's nuclear triad designed to deter enemy attacks.

Defense officials told Montana senators they would trim about 30 to 50 of the ICBMs to comply with



1st Lts. Matthew Ditson, sitting, and John Malek practice possible scenarios in the missile procedures trainer. U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO/AIRMAN 1ST CLASS KATRINA HEIKKINEN

MANG, Malmstrom combined employ about 5,000 people and have a \$400 million impact on the Great Falls economy.

reductions called for in the New START treaty with Russia.

Weissman said Global Strike Command officials say they prefer to take the missiles equally from each base, to allow continued cross-training of personnel at the three bases.



Deppe

However, in November Panetta warned that elimination of all ICBMs, plus no needed upgrades for nuclear subs and bombers, could be among major cuts considered if Congress can't reach agreement on budget reductions, forcing \$500 billion in "sequestration cuts" over 10 years in both defense and social programs.

Some critics felt Panetta was just issuing dire warnings to spur Con-

gress to act and wouldn't actually eliminate any major parts of the nuclear triad.

But retired Maj. Gen. Tom Deppe, a former Malmstrom commander, who believes strongly in the triad, said major cuts are needed and that even he doesn't think the nation needs 450 ICBMs anymore.

Major savings could be made by eliminating 50 or maybe even 150 missiles from one of the three bases, Deppe said. All three bases have strengths and weaknesses, and their state's political clout could come into play if it reaches the stage of closing one, he said.

Deppe, Weissman and Malicott each stressed that ICBMs, which have been modernized to last until at least 2030, are the least expensive triad leg to operate, can respond quickly and are an effective deterrent, with so many missiles spread

over such a large area being virtually impossible for an enemy to take out in a surprise attack.

Malmstrom also is home to a RED HORSE mobile construction unit.

Vital economic cogs

Malmstrom and the Montana Air National Guard have been strong linchpins of the Great Falls economy and major contributors to national defense since just after World War II.

In fact, Cascade County was one of two urban areas in Montana that largely escaped the impact of the recent recession because of the military's stable presence here, according to economists with the University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

Malmstrom and MANG airmen also contribute to the community's social fabric as good neighbors and volunteers.

Combined, the two units employ about 5,000 people, counting the traditional, part-time Guard members, and provide an estimated \$400 million in economic impact.

That figure includes payroll, construction and operations — and spinoff service jobs.

"That's a huge amount of money they're pumping into the local economy," Weissman said. "It's helped keep Great Falls stable for so long."

He cited statistics that the military accounts for 47 percent of the primary sector economy — revenue that's brought into Great Falls from outside the region.

"Malmstrom also brings people in from all over the country, giving us better social diversity," he added. "They're active school parents and volunteers. Some fall in love with the area and come back to Great Falls to retire."

Meanwhile, "Montana Air Guard members come from all around Montana, but the bulk from Cascade County," Weissman said. "These guys and gals are our neighbors. Guard service gives them part-time work that increases their household income. And their training provides Great Falls good leaders and a more skilled workforce."

Malmstrom has been primarily a missile base since its first flight of 10 Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs, was rushed to alert during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.

The Montana Air National Guard has flown seven types of progressively more-advanced fighter jets since the late 1940s. ■

Malmstrom statistics

Annual payroll

Military: \$151.4 million
Federal civilian: \$39.9 million
Other civilian: \$7.6 million
Total: \$198.9 million

Annual Expenditures

Construction: \$43.3 million
Services: \$12.7 million
Equipment, supplies: \$24.8 million
Total: \$80.8 million

Indirect Impact

Ripple effect jobs: 1,593
Estimated value: \$45.9 million

Economic Impact

Direct impact: \$279.7 million
Indirect: \$45.9 million
Total impact: \$335.6 million

Personnel

Military: 3,403
Family members: 3,052
Air Force civilians: 692
Total employees: 4,095
Contractors, others: 755
Total jobs: 4,850

Missiles

Minuteman IIIs: 150
Farthest silo: 152 miles
Nearest silo: 16 miles
Total area: 13,800 square miles



Staff Sgt. Scott Kohles of the Montana Air National Guard supervises the fueling of an F-15 at the MANG facility on Gore Hill. TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO/RYAN HALL

Aircraft

UH-1N Iroquois helicopters: 7
Flying hours: 2,937
Actual rescues in 2011: 6
Rescue assists: 8

Capital Assets (acres)

Public domain: 490
Owned: 3,900
Easement: 24,201
Leased: 16
Total: 28,606

Buildings:

On base: 781
Off-base: 266
Total: 1,047

Construction contracts

Family housing: \$13.7 million
Military construction: \$10.6 million

Operations and maintenance:

16.8 million
Other: \$2.4 million
Total: \$43.4 million

MANG stats

Annual payroll

Military technicians: \$23.5 million
Active Guard/Reserve: \$9.7 million
Traditional Guard: \$15.6 million
Total payroll: \$48.8 million

Personnel

Military technicians: 302
Active Guard/Reserve: 75
State employees: 40
Securitas security: 15
Strictly traditional: 663
Total: 1,095

Economic impact

Payroll: \$48.7 million
Indirect jobs created: 238
Value, indirect jobs: \$9.4 million
Construction, purchases: \$2.7 million
Cooperative expenditures: \$5.8 million
Annual impact: \$66.6

MANG planes

F-15C: 17
F-15D: 2
Air hours: 2,428
Sorties: 1,774

Value

F-15C/D: \$570 million
Munitions: \$59 million

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INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Flying high

Airport lands low-cost carrier, enjoys record boarding numbers

By **PETER JOHNSON**
Tribune Staff Writer

Great Falls International Airport set a record for commercial boardings in 2011 in part because of increased use by Canadians and business people involved in energy development, Airport Director John Faulkner said.

To keep things flying in the right direction, the Airport Authority, with the help of local businesses and entities, recruited a low-cost airline and will make terminal building changes to speed and smooth security checks.

The low-cost commercial carrier Frontier Airline will add Great Falls to its summer schedule, with four flights a week to Denver from May to September.

Construction on the terminal improvements is expected to start at mid-summer and be completed by next March.

Passenger boardings were 172,375 last year, or about 350,000 when both departing and arriving passengers are counted.

"We didn't just barely beat the previous top record," Faulkner

said. "This was easily the busiest year in the airport's history. We had an average of 1,000 more passenger boardings per month last year than during the previous high in 2005."

But the blue skies of those gains come with a few clouds, he added.

"While the Airport Authority is excited about our record year, we remain focused on expanding our air service options in this very difficult airline industry environment to support jobs in our community and protect our investment in aviation," Faulkner said.

The Great Falls airport is experiencing a fairly sizeable "leakage," with nearly half of the potential passengers within two hours' drive of Great Falls flying out of other area airports, some with more discount fares.

In addition, the number of airlines was reduced because of mergers and one bankruptcy, Faulkner said. Existing airlines are



Faulkner

reducing their number of flights, even eliminating service to some mid-sized airports, because of concerns about high fuel costs and the uncertain economy.

It's projected that airlines will eliminate smaller, less fuel-efficient regional jets with fewer than 100 passengers within a decade, he said. Allegiant flies 150-seat planes to Las Vegas and Phoenix several times a week from Great Falls. But other airlines serving Great Falls fly at-risk 50- to 75-seat planes.

That's why the Airport Authority, with support from the Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and regional businesses, offered incentives to recruit Frontier to Great Falls.

The Chamber raised several hundred thousand dollars from local and regional individuals and businesses for the Low Cost Airline Incentive Fund.

"Getting low-cost airline service to Great Falls is vital to the future of the air service locally and regionally," said Chamber President Steve Malcott. "It's one of the key economic development issues

in the last five or 10 years."

Based on experiences of other cities, Faulkner estimates that if

Frontier is successful in Great Falls and makes its flights permanent, it will mean 17,000 new visitors to Great Falls annually and save passengers \$7 million a year in airline rates since other airlines typically lower their rates by 20 percent to remain competitive.

By increasing options and lowering costs, airport officials hope to continue boosting passenger loads and lure back area passengers, so Great Falls can show airlines it can fill the bigger 100-passenger planes of the future.

Streamlined security

The big boost in passenger traffic last year "stressed our screening checkpoints to their limits," Faulkner said. "It was not >>>



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► uncommon for lines in the morning to reach 40 minute waits leading to a significant increase in the number of passengers missing flights. It has been a challenge to convince passengers to arrive 90 minutes early at a small airport."

Reconfiguration of the terminal is expected to shorten lines, smooth operations for Transportation Security Administration officers and add amenities once passengers clear security.

Under the current alignment, TSA officers operate checkpoints at two concourses at opposite ends of the terminal.

There's no room for a restaurant or coffee shop once passengers clear security, and there isn't much space between the airline gates and checkpoints, leading to crowded confusion. Each concourse has only one small unisex bathroom, a drinking fountain and a vending machine.

Work on \$6 million in improvements is expected to start in June.

Under the change, the back of the terminal building will be realigned so that all passengers go through a single TSA checkpoint in the middle of the second floor, about where the gift shop is now. There will be room behind the checkpoint for a restaurant, gift shop, large bathrooms and comfortable seating, with concourses and gates branching off a short distance away. In fact a new gate will be added, helping with future airline growth.

Faulkner listed other advantages:

» TSA agents can operate more efficiently with just one checkpoint, but three lanes, reducing lines.

» Passengers can clear security easily and relax in more comfortable settings, including bigger restrooms, a restaurant and gift shop they'd find in a big airport.

» The expanded checkpoint will allow the airport to serve larger aircraft.

Faulkner said he doesn't anticipate much disruption to travelers since the existing checkpoints will remain in operation until the new one is complete. Most of the construction is on the exterior of the terminal away from passengers. The portion of the building that is impacted, the gift shop, will be relocated.

Grounds, business good

After several years of major improvements, the terminal, main runway and taxiways are in great shape, Faulkner said.



An artist's rendering shows planned terminal improvements at the Great Falls International Airport on Gore Hill. The change would create a single security checkpoint and allow passengers who have cleared security to access a restaurant, gift shop and larger bathrooms than currently available. AIRPORT AUTHORITY ILLUSTRATION

Notably, the airport completed a \$42 million renovation of its main runway in 2007 that included high tech, Category III equipment that helps instrument-equipped planes land in low visibility.

The airport has a study that's under way to determine which of its two crosswind runways is ready for major repairs.

The Airport Authority also will award a \$500,000 grading project to mitigate surface ponding near the sound end of the main runway. Standing surface water can be a safety factor by attracting wildlife.

The airport also nearly ran short of parking a few times last year and is looking to expand it by this summer's busy season, Faulkner said.

The Airport Authority signed a new four-year lease last year with the airlines serving Great Falls. The airlines provide about 95 percent of the airport's operating revenue, with the rest coming from other airport business tenants.

Faulkner is marketing land the airport owns south of the county jail with access to Interstate 15 for retail or commercial use to boost airport revenue, reduce dependence on airlines and diversity shopping and dining for local residents. He said he's had sever- ►►

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► al lookers and expects some development there as the economy improves.

Roxann Tveter, chief financial officer for Holman Aviation, a long-time fixed base operator that services planes at the airport, said business has been good.

"The year 2010 was a record year for us in sales and profits, and 2011 was nearly as good," she said, although government contract fuel was down.

"In the past six months we've had three new companies base their corporate aircraft with us, which is a big plus," Tveter said. "And airlines led by Allegiant are scheduling more flights to Great Falls this year, which will increase our fueling and service work."

Tveter said Holman Aviation supports efforts to land a low-cost airline and make the security checks more efficient.

Great Falls International Airport completed \$105 million in improvements over the past decade.

The most important improvements have been a sophisticated instrument landing system, a FedEx hub facility, refurbishment of several hangars to host Amax, a regional jet heavy maintenance center which has about 150 employees, and a major facelift to



Transportation Security Administration officials check passengers recently at one of two current checkpoints at Great Falls International Airport. Construction that's slated to start this summer will create a single checkpoint, resulting in a quicker, more efficient clearance process. TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO/RIION SANDERS

its terminal building.

The airport is served by United Express, Delta Airlines, Allegiant Air and Horizon airlines. Nonstop

service is available to Minneapolis, Salt Lake City, Seattle, Denver, Las Vegas and Phoenix. Frontier Airlines is adding a direct Denver

flight in May.

In addition to commercial airline service, the airport has a FedEx cargo sorting facility, with about 100 employees, and is the home of the Montana Air National Guard.

The Air National Guard hosts the 120th Fighter Wing with about 355 full-time personnel and 1,100 part-time, traditional guardsmen.

The airport also houses a U.S. Customs and Border Protection office, which can provide clearance for international flights and cargo.

Two fixed-base operators, Front Range Aviation and Holman Aviation, offer fuel and aircraft maintenance and repair.

The Great Falls branch of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Northern Border Air Wing was activated in 2006 to provide homeland security in an eight-state region. It now includes 65 federal law-enforcement officers, pilots, air crew and support personnel.

The airport passenger terminal has conference facilities with great views of Great Falls. Operated by AirHost, the airport's banquet facility accommodates events from weddings to training sessions, with a full menu and rooms that can handle groups from a handful to 600 people. ■

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REGIONAL ECONOMY

Laying groundwork

Area towns and counties working to spur growth and feeling boost from oil and gas leasing

By ERIN MADISON
Tribune Staff Writer

In winter, most of Lewistown's residents who work in construction are out of work.

However, this winter many of those workers are traveling to Sidney or even Williston, N.D., and finding work in the oil fields, said Kathie Bailey, executive director of the Snowy Mountain Development Corporation in Lewistown.

"The oil industry is impacting us through that manner," she said. "It's keeping people employed who otherwise may not be employed."

And it's helping many Lewistown businesses because those workers come home during their time off with money to spend in the community.

"We're hearing from our businesses that they're doing better than what we originally thought might happen after the first of the year," Bailey said.

While relatively little oil drilling is going on across the state, there is a fair amount of leasing activity, which has been a boost to many communities across central and northcentral Montana.

Experts expect to see even more oil and gas activity in the coming year.

"We are seeing more drilling activity in Montana, and I think we will see substantially more drilling



A work crew from T.P. Construction of Havre builds a rail spur recently near Shelby as part of plans to build an intermodal facility, which allow shipping containers to be transferred from truck to rail. TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO/ION SANDERS

activity in the next year," said Tom Richmond, administrator and petroleum engineer with the Montana Board of Oil and Gas.

Havre is seeing workers from the eastern Montana oil fields looking for housing in Havre, said Paul Tuss, executive



Tuss

director of the five-county Bear Paw Development Corporation.

He's heard from some that Havre is the closest place to the oil fields to find affordable housing.

"Obviously the furious activity that is taking place on the eastern edge of Montana is a long way from Havre, but the impacts are being felt here" Tuss said.

Toole County is seeing more leasing interest recently than in the last

several years, said Larry Bonderud, mayor of Shelby.

"There's a tremendous amount of interest in this whole area," he said.

Housing pressure

Sweetgrass Development, which covers Cascade, Glacier, Pondera, Teton and Toole counties, is planning a study to assess the region's capacity for future development, such as housing, roads, and water and sewer infrastructure. The study is an attempt to get ahead of the curve in case a major oil boom hits this area, said Sarah Converse, executive director of Sweetgrass Development.

As part of the study Sweetgrass plans to talk to community leaders from North Dakota and eastern Montana about what they wish they knew before the oil boom hit those areas.

Much of northcentral Montana is already feeling a squeeze on housing.

"Regardless of where you go in our region, housing is an issue," said Tuss, whose organization covers Hill, Blaine, Liberty, Chouteau and Phillips counties. "The need for additional housing in our area ➤➤"



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➤ is noticeable."

Shelby already has about 250 lots that are ready to be built on, Bonderud said.

"We have a lot of our infrastructure in place," he said. "It'd be easy for us to accommodate a modest housing boom."

Shelby saw about 10 new dwellings built in 2011, which is a boom for the community. There are also some developers looking to build multi-unit apartment buildings.

Havre has also seen some new housing, Tuss said.

"We have seen some growth in the number of housing starts," he said.

Industrial parks, rail facility

Late last year, The Northern Express Transport Authority in Shelby secured an almost \$10 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to complete an intermodal facility that will allow shipping containers to be transferred from truck to rail.

"Their intermodal facility will be an asset to the region," Converse said.

Bonderud expects the intermodal facility to generate about 200 construction jobs. Once it's complete it probably will employ about 150 people.

Entities around the region are working to create industrial parks, including the Cut Bank Airport, the city of Conrad and Pondera County, Converse said.

Conrad is considering a large truck-stop area near its interstate exit, with the idea of offering services to travelers before they reach Canada, she said. Often automotive parts and services are much less expensive in the U.S.



A drilling rig owned by Rosetta Resources and drilled by Pioneer Drilling explores for oil and gas on the Blackfeet Reservation. TRIBUNE PHOTO/LARRY BECKNER

than in Canada.

Cut Bank has an international airport with additional land outside the FAA-regulated area, Converse said. The industrial park would be well located near to the airport, Highway 2 and Shelby's intermodal facility.

Energy projects

Many other projects around the region are bringing jobs and economic benefit to area communities.

In January, NaturEner USA announced that it plans to build a wind farm on 21,000 acres in Glacier and Toole counties. The wind farm, located about 20 miles northwest of Shelby near Kevin, will include 126 Acciona wind turbines.

Bonderud expects about 300 construction workers to be employed by the project.

"All these projects are pretty employment intensive," he said.

Montana Alberta Tie Line LLP, which will connect Great Falls and Lethbridge, Alberta, is also moving ahead.

A judge in January upheld an eminent domain law passed by the 2011 Legislature.

The MATL project will employ 50 to 75 workers, Bonderud said.

Also in the Shelby area, Montana State University's Energy Research Institute and the U.S. Department of Energy are studying carbon sequestration at the Kevin Dome geological formation. The \$85 million project brings crews of researchers, some with as many as 50 people, Bonderud said.

"That's going to have a real positive impact on the area," he said.

A Texas-based company is also moving ahead to construct a facility near Bynum to manufacture large modular equipment needed in oil-processing facilities in Canada.

"They're building; they're hiring," Converse said.

The facility is supposed to be operational by spring, Lauren Engineers and Constructors officials said previously. Initially, 75 to 100 people will be employed, with about half coming from the area.

Shuttle loaders

The region has seen the addition of three shuttle loaders in the past year.

Two are being built near Chester and are expected to be operational this spring. Another is under construction in Chouteau County.

"In our five-county region, we've got three shuttle loaders under construction as we speak," Tuss said at the end of January.

"Just those projects alone represent a massive amount of new construction for our region," he added.

The shuttle loaders offer an immediate infusion of construction jobs, and each also will offer six or seven permanent jobs.

Those 12 or so new jobs in Chester are the per-capita equivalent of about 400 jobs in Cascade County or 750 in Yellowstone County.

"It's just a huge shot in the arm for this community," Tuss said.

The shuttle loaders also benefit area farmers, because it cuts down the distance they have to haul their grain.

With grain prices expected to stay high this year, and about 1 million acres coming out of the Conservation Reserve Program between 2011 and 2012, regional communities stand to benefit from a strong year in agriculture.

Canadian traffic

Much of the region is also seeing a boost from Canadian trade.

"We along the Hi-Line ... have seen a noticeable increase in the volume of Canadian traffic coming through our region," Tuss said.

There are several initiatives on the Hi-Line to make the area more friendly for Canadian business. Those include expanding more ports to being 24-hour entries.

Between the Canadian visitors and the various projects, Bonderud noticed a marked uptick in activity around Shelby.

"The hotels are full," he said. "The restaurants are busier."

"We're pretty excited about 2012," he said. ■

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ECONOMIC FORECAST

Steady as she goes

Economists see continued modest growth for Montana and Cascade County over next few years

By ERIN MADISON
Tribune Staff Writer

Cascade County is one of two bright spots in Montana during the recession, according to Paul Polzin director emeritus of the University of Montana's Bureau of Business and Economic Research

Neither Lewis and Clark County nor Cascade County saw an economic decrease during the recession.



Polzin

In Cascade County that was largely because of Malmstrom Air Force Base's stability.

For the coming year, Polzin predicts slow, steady growth in Cascade County. His forecast, which was presented in January during the Bureau's annual economic outlook tour, calls for 1.8 percent growth for the county this year and 2 percent growth each of the following three years.

Those numbers are comparable to Polzin's predictions for most of Montana's larger cities.

He expects to see growth in the county's transportation sector thanks to energy projects. Manufacturing and Cascade County's role as a trade center are expected to remain stable. Meanwhile the outlook for Malmstrom and federal civilian jobs is uncertain because of a possible Base Realignment and Closure.

Home building did "sputter to a snail's pace" in Cascade County during the recession, Polzin said. That's not expected to recover before 2013.

Nationwide, a full economic recovery could be several years out, said Patrick Barkey, bureau director.

"People are calling it the Great Recession, but I don't think anyone's going to call it a great recovery," Barkey said.

The recent recession, which officially ended in June 2009, is differ-

ent from past recessions in the United States because it involved a full banking crisis.

Compared with other recessions that included banking crises, such as 1992 in Japan and 2001 in Argentina, the U.S. economy is following past recovery trends. Often, the economy still isn't back to the pre-recession trend even after five or seven years.

"There is no country that has bounced back quickly from this kind of recession," Barkey said.

Montana's recovery to date has been slower than expected.

The state's economy nearly stalled in 2011, growing only 0.7 percent — much less than the predicted 2.6 percent growth. Last year it had a slower growth rate than the 1.5 percent seen in 2010.

That slow growth was caused by a couple of factors, Barkey said. Inflation was higher than predicted in 2011, and a key sectors of the Montana economy — health care and government employment — underperformed.

So far, Montana hasn't seen a surge to get it back to pre-recession levels, he said.

"We've had growth, but not enough growth ... to bring us back to where the train was going before," Barkey said.



Barkey

Montana is expected to grow its economy by 2 percent this year and 2.4 percent in each of the following three years.

Barkey added that he expects the economy to ebb and flow as it continues to recover, but he doesn't expect the economy to drop into another recession.

The state is bolstered by the oil development occurring in eastern and northern Montana.

"We are seeing more drilling activity in Montana, and I think we will see substantially more drilling activity in the next year," Tom

Richmond, administrator and petroleum engineer with the Montana Board of Oil and Gas, said during the presentation.

As leases run out in North Dakota, Richmond expects to see more drilling rigs move across the border into Montana.

The Bakken Formation in North Dakota is substantially thicker than it is in Montana, he said. That's part of the reason that North Dakota is seeing more oil activity than the Treasure State.

The activity in the North Dakotan Bakken largely has been dependent on technology changes made specifically for that area.

"That's not to say Montana doesn't have a significant resource in

the Bakken, however, because it does," Richmond said.

The activity in North Dakota changes the timeline for activity in eastern Montana, but not the potential, he added.

Richmond said a common misconception is that North Dakota's tax structure is more attractive to oil companies. In reality, Montana offers lower taxes than its eastern neighbor. Montana charges a 9.25 percent tax rate, compared with 11.5 percent in North Dakota. Montana also offers an 18-month tax holiday, which isn't offered in North Dakota.

"We are not a high-tax state," Richmond said. "We are competitive with our neighbors." ■

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EDUCATION

Colleges look to future

Higher education facilities embrace new ways to better serve changing student needs

By ERIN MADISON
Tribune Staff Writer

MSU-Great Falls College of Technology is working on everything from beefing up its online course offerings to improving graduation rates to changing how students receive advising services.

"There's a lot of change afoot at the college," said Judy Hay, assistant dean of student services at MSU-Great Falls. "We are about in the middle of where we want to go in terms of a 10-year journey."

In September 2011, the college opened a new student advising center and added three new advisers for a total of five. Students now work with the same adviser from their first semester to graduation.

"Every new student gets one adviser and that adviser is their adviser until they graduate," Hay said.

Previously, students were assigned a faculty member who served as their adviser, but it was hard to guarantee consistency among that many different advisers and students often ended up with several advisers throughout their higher education.

"You'd get a new adviser every time you change programs," Hay said.

That often resulted in things falling through the cracks.

One of the goals of the advising center is that it will result in students taking fewer classes to earn their degrees and thereby decrease the time it takes students to get to graduation.

"Our college has been focusing on completion rates, success rate and time to degree," Hay said.

With faculty members no longer serving as advisers, they've been able to redesign their courses and take over the academic support program, which includes tutoring and other services.

The goal of redesigning courses is to find ways to support students through the difficult and rigorous classes that are required in many of the programs at MSU-Great Falls.



University of Great Falls chemistry professor Chrissie Carpenter, center, works with students Eddie Bossert, left, and Nychele Carley, right. PHOTO COURTESY OF UGF

"Our success rates are kind of average," Hay said. "We want our students to really be successful."

"We are not putting up with mediocrity," she added. "We want to be really good."

New chancellor

Changes may be in store for MSU-Northern also, but first James Limbaugh, who took over as chancellor on Jan. 1, is taking time to get to know the university and the community and get a good understanding of the school's vision.



Limbaugh

He sees it as his job to serve as a catalyst to get all the ideas about school's future coalesced into one vision.

Limbaugh comes to MSU-Northern from Angelo State University in San Angelo, Texas, where he served as vice president for strategy, planning and policy. He was attracted to the Havre institution because of the potential he sees.

"I have never been in a college community that has the kind of

community support that Northern enjoys," Limbaugh said. "People here are proud of Northern."

While building on the strengths that Northern already possesses, Limbaugh also hopes to increase enrollment and look for opportunities for new programs.

"We have to look at work force trends and analyze our programs to see if we are providing the best possible mix of programs," he said.

Diesel technology, nursing, business and education continue to be the most popular programs at MSU-Northern, as they long have been.

Limbaugh also hopes to look at new ways to provide education to the new generation of students who grew up with technology and want more of their education delivered through technology.

As the number of seniors graduating from high school is declining statewide, Northern also needs to find new ways to successfully meet the demands of and attract more non-traditional students.

UGF deepens learning

Enrollment at the University of Great Falls is growing.

This fall, enrollment grew by 12 percent, pushing enrollment at the liberal arts university to more than 1,000 students for the first time in 12 years.

Part of that is because the school is recruiting more traditional-aged students, where it used to mainly have non-traditional students, said President Eugene McAllister.

But part of the increase can be credited to the university changing the way it teaches its students, he said.

"We're getting better and better at engaging each student," he said.

Faculty at the university recently went through a two-day development program on teaching critical thinking.

In the 1950s and '60s, liberal education was really just about knowledge for the sake of knowledge, said Diane Lund, biology pro- ➤

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MSU-Great Falls students perform a mock surgery in the college's simulation hospital. TRIBUNE PHOTO/RIION SANDERS

➤ fessor at UGF. In the '80s, the focus shifted to job skills and simply preparing students to work and make money. More recently, higher education has been shifting back to teaching students soft skills, including critical thinking.

Critical thinking can be incorporated into classes in a variety of ways. Lund has her upper-division biology students write a paper that attempts to explain a topic to a layperson. That forces students to think in a broader sense about material that they are very focused on.

Critical thinking is also taught through integrated learning communities, which have been part of the school's core curriculum for two years. ILCs are team-taught by two professors from different disciplines who focus on a common theme, said Joe Simonsen, assistant professor of English.

UGF recently added a performing arts entrepreneur professor. While the school doesn't offer a theater major, it wanted to another extracurricular activity for students.

"We brought him in specifically to create a creative opportunity for our students," McAllister said.

The professor organized a performance called "Dead Legends" that was hugely successful. Some

70 students participated, some that had never done theater before.

UGF added a RN to BSN nursing completion program several years ago. Since then, that program has grown and continues to be very popular, McAllister said.

New health programs

MSU-Great Falls' health science programs continue to be very popular with most programs running at capacity, said Greg Paulauskis, Health Science Division director.

Health careers are often the most stable during economic downturns, he said, which is probably adding to the programs' popularity.

"It is the safe haven of the economic world when it comes to occupations," Paulauskis said.

MSU-Great Falls officially opened its new simulated hospital in November. The new facility, located in the college's basement, acts as a practice area where students can try out skills before doing clinicals in a real hospital.

Students work with mannequins, and the simulated hospital offers settings such as a radiology unit, a surgical suite, an intensive-care unit and an ambulance.

While most of the college's

health science programs are filling up, administrators are work to add new health programs.

The school's new dietetic technician program will begin accepting students in fall 2012.

Diet techs can work in hospitals, food companies, health centers and in other roles conducting nutrition screenings, managing food service operations, teaching nutrition classes and developing recipes and menus.

The program is designed so that after students complete one year of pre-requisite classes and one year of core classes, they can either graduate and go to work or move on to MSU-Bozeman to com-

plete a bachelor's degree in dietetics, Paulauskis said.

MSU-Great Falls is also adding a registered nursing program that starts fall 2012.

"The community was asking that our institution start an RN program," Paulauskis said.

Students start with a year of prerequisites, followed by two semesters in the practical nursing program. From there, they can start working as a licensed practical nurse or apply for the RN program. Many students may end up working part-time as an LPN while continuing in the RN program.

"Now they're able to help fund their education through a much better wage," Paulauskis said.

MSU-Great Falls is in the early stages of creating a veterinary technician program. The Board of Regents will discuss that program at its March meeting.

Currently there is no such program in the state, Paulauskis said. He anticipates that the all-online degree will be very popular if approved. Many vets around the state will probably have current employees enroll in the program.

Childcare center

MSU-Great Falls also hopes to build a new Child Development Center that would offer childcare for students' children.

The average age of students at the college is 27 to 28, and childcare can often be a barrier for people wishing to go back to school, Hay said.

The center will be located at the south end of the school's property and will be able to take 80 children from birth to pre-school.

The center will accept children of students and other children, but students will receive a reduced rate.

Hay hopes the center will open in fall 2012 or spring 2013. ■

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HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY

Healthy vital signs

Benefis Health System and the Great Falls Clinic are strong performers planning for further growth

By JO DEE BLACK
Tribune Business Editor

Great Falls' health care industry was one of the factors that buoyed the local economy during the recession, according to state economists.

Benefis Health System is the community's largest private employer, with almost 2,700 personnel. The Great Falls Clinic, the second-largest health care provider in the city, has a payroll of about 440 and there are numerous other private health care providers in the city.

A recent study conducted for Benefis found health care is indirectly attributable for an additional 2,100 jobs in Great Falls.

With specialties ranging from cancer care and orthopedics to pain management and state-of-the-art wound care, Great Falls is the major regional health care center serving central and northern Montana. In fact, people who live outside of Cascade County receiving medical care here account for about 11 percent of the economic base, according to Paul Polzin, director emeritus of the Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

Last fall Benefis opened the Benefis Medical Professional Center immediately to the west of the east campus hospital, emergency room, surgical units and other operations.

The four-story center includes offices for some of the almost 100 health care providers, including physicians, now employed by Benefis.

The new center, which is adjacent to the Orthopedic Center of Montana and connected by a sky bridge to the Benefis South Tower, is one of a suite of new construction and facility upgrades that improve patient care in several ways, said Benefis CEO John Goodnow.



Benefis Health System employees tend to a patient following a heart catheterization procedure to open a blocked artery recently. Treatment for heart attack is among the 26 common procedures and conditions for which Benefis was given a Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence by HealthGrades, a leading hospital ratings organization. The award places Benefis in the top 5 percent of hospitals nationwide. TRIBUNE PHOTO/JOSHUA KODIS

"Our facilities are a gigantic asset when it comes to physician recruitment," he said.



Goodnow

Benefis providers now practice 25 specialties and some of those area could use additional physicians, he said. "We are still recruiting for our heart program and we could use more physicians in gastroenterology and dermatol-

ogy," he said. "We have providers recruited that will be coming this summer to join the ear, nose and throat and neurological surgery practices. And we are always recruiting for primary care and internal medicine."

The Benefis heart program has grown enough to establish a cardiac electrophysiology program in Great Falls, which diagnoses and treats the electrical activities of the heart, Goodnow said.

Benefis is converting the rest of its in-patient hospital rooms to private rooms and building the

first phase of a new senior campus, which will include memory care facilities, assisted living cottages and a state-of-the-art nursing home with private rooms and a model of care giving where a single staff member cares for one resident, even eating with them on their own schedule.

"It's just a much better model for care," Goodnow said.

In January, Benefis was rated among the top 5 percent of hospitals in the U.S. by HealthGrades, a hospital rating agency.

"We've achieved this rank- ➤➤

ing seven of the past eight years and that's testament of the talent and dedication of our employees at all levels, those who care for outpatients at the bedside and all of those who support them," said Goodnow.

Benefis also continued to reduce costs in 2012, an initiative started in 2009, when in a typical Medicare case, federal reimbursement covered only 75 cents on the dollar of the cost of providing that care. In 2011, through cost reductions and efficiencies, Benefis reached 91 cents on the dollar for Medicare cases and is working for 95 cents on the dollar for 2012.

By looking at every system in the organization, from purchasing and contracting to staffing, Benefis also improved care delivery, Goodnow said.

"Very few hospitals in the entire country break even on Medicare reimbursement, but we intend to do so in 2012," he said. "And that positions us for ongoing success, despite health care reform and reimbursement reductions."

The Great Falls Clinic, which has 47 physicians and health care providers, entered a partnership with Symbion Healthcare Inc. last summer, a move intended to secure additional capital and management resources that will help the Clinic grow and develop.

Symbion, headquartered in Nashville, Tenn., partners with physicians, hospitals and health systems to develop



Rowe



Great Falls Clinic operates three clinics, a surgery center and a 20-bed hospital, shown here. TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO/ LARRY BECKNER

and operate short-stay surgical facilities. Symbion's network includes 70 facilities in 28 states, including the Great Falls Clinic.

The Clinic also hired a new chief executive officer in December. David B. Rowe replaced Patrick Herman, who left in June to accept an associate professor position in Idaho. Rowe has been in hospital management since 1978.

"David has a solid track record of working with physician groups and we like the thoughtful way he approaches progress," said Dr.



Maynard

Nancy Maynard, chairwoman of Clinic's executive committee.

The partnership with Symbion positions the Clinic well as it moves forward, said Rowe, which is one of the reasons he was interested in the job.

The Great Falls Clinic facilities include three clinics, a surgery center and a 20-bed hospital, the Great Falls Clinic Medical Center.

The Clinic, too, is recruiting providers.

"We have active searches in place, but recruitment needs to include finding people who want to live in this region," said Maynard.

Maynard joined the Great Falls Clinic in 1984 and said health care in the area is excellent, the result of a push for quality and expanding care.

The Clinic receives good feedback from patient surveys, Rowe said, which is one indication that its work to provide quality care is successful, said Rowe.

"We survey pretty extensively and our latest report shows we are strong across all areas, including communication with doctors and nurses, staff response, pain management and overall rating," Rowe said.

That survey is conducted by Hospital Care Quality Information from the Consumer Perspective and is designed to produce comparable data on the patient's perspective on care.

The Clinic was rated at or above the 90th percentile of all health care facilities surveyed in eight of nine categories and higher than the state and national average ratings in every category. ■



Benefis Health System's patient tower is a state-of-the-art facility. TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO



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AGRICULTURE

Optimism growing

Strong demand, weak dollar, new shuttle loaders promising, but farm bill sows uncertainty

By JO DEE BLACK
Tribune Business Editor

Increasing consumer demand in developing countries for U.S. grain and cattle and the weak U.S. dollar make the prospects for Montana's farmers and ranchers bright this year.

Grain companies, including at least one new to the Montana market, announced plans to build five new shuttle loader grain elevators capable of loading 110-car trains in 2011 and construction started on a new shuttle loader near Conrad in January.

Production acres are increasing as the Conservation Reserve Program is reduced and some farmers chose not to renew contracts in order to take advantage of higher grain prices.

Montana State University Agriculture Professor George Haynes estimates another 1 million acres of Montana crop land will come out of CRP and be planted during the next year.

"It's nice to be wanted, to be so competed over," said Lola Raska, executive vice president of the Montana Grain Growers Association. "There's not only competition now with more grain companies building shuttle loaders, but also competition for acres between crops."

"Once all farmers have access to a shuttle loader to sell their grain to, then there will be an even playing field again, and I think we'll see that competition even out."

"I think farmers are very pleased to see these announcements, but are surprised that there have been so many."

Drought in the Southwest forced ranchers in that part of the country to reduce their cattle herds, pushing calf prices up by 17 percent from 2010, when calf prices increased by almost 20 percent from 2009. By the end of the year, U.S. beef exports are expected to set a record, exceeding 10 percent of total production, said Haynes.

But an uncertain future Farm



Bruce Myllymaki uses a calf table to brand calves with his family on their Stanford farm in 2010. TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO/ION SANDERS

Bill is tempering optimism in the agriculture sector, industry officials say.

Montana agriculture say they are concerned about potential cuts to commodity programs, federal crop insurance subsidies and disaster assistance.

"I think that we've been on the verge of losing family farms for a long time," said Chris Christensen, a lobbyist for the Montana Farmers Union. "...What happens in the next farm bill really weighs heavily on how many of our smaller farms and ranches will remain in business. One of the areas that we really must continue to keep in place is programs for catastrophic losses —insurance for people who are wiped out in a hailstorm or flooding." ■

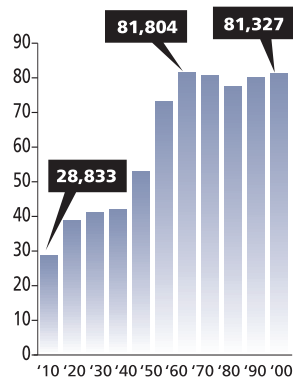


Gavilon Grain is building a shuttle loader grain loading facility on the west side of Chester. TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO/LARRY BECKNER

VITALS

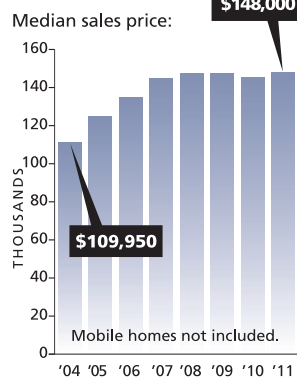
GREAT FALLS AND CASCADE COUNTY

CASCADE COUNTY POPULATION



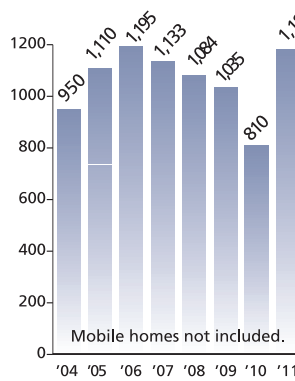
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS

GREAT FALLS HOME VALUES



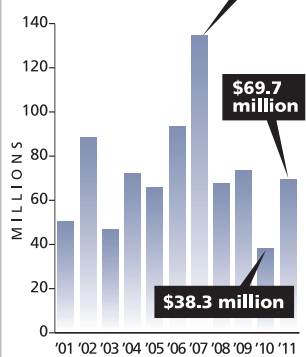
SOURCE: GREAT FALLS ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

GREAT FALLS HOME SALES



SOURCE: GREAT FALLS ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

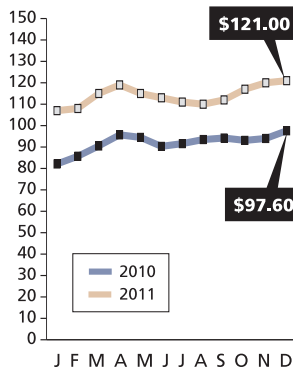
GREAT FALLS BUILDING PERMIT VALUES



SOURCE: CITY OF GREAT FALLS

U.S. CATTLE PRICES

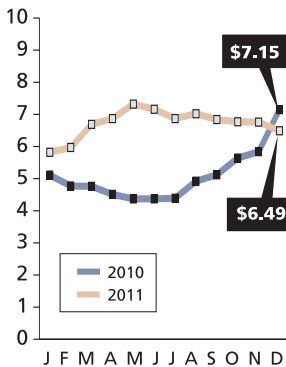
Dollars per 100 pounds:



SOURCE: USDA

WINTER WHEAT PRICES

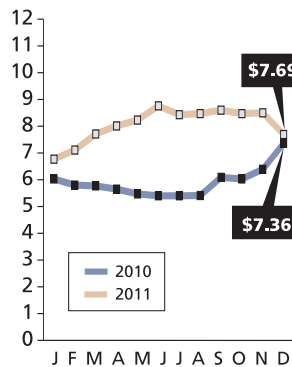
Dollars per bushel:



SOURCE: MONTANA AG STATISTICS SERVICE

SPRING WHEAT PRICES

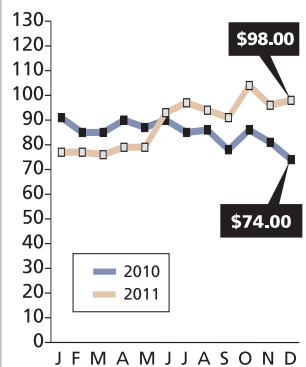
Dollars per bushel:



SOURCE: MONTANA AG STATISTICS SERVICE

HAY PRICES

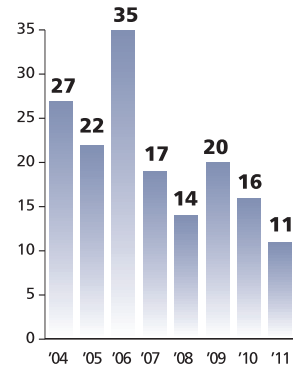
Dollars per ton:



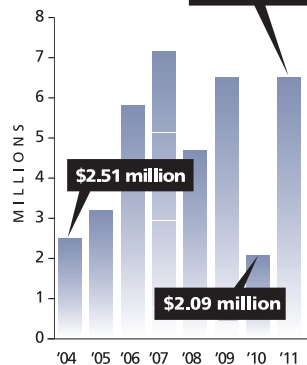
SOURCE: MONTANA AG STATISTICS SERVICE

CASCADE COUNTY SBA LOANS

Number of loans

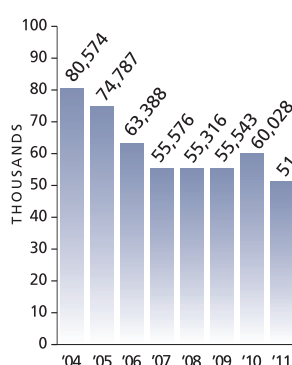


Total

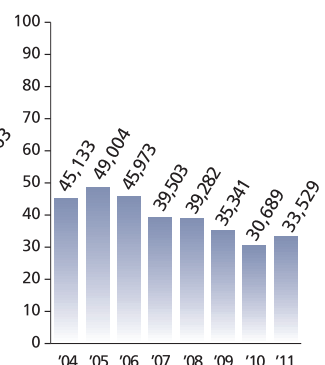


VISITATION AT GREAT FALLS TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center



C.M. Russell Museum



SNAPSHOT OF NORTHCENTRAL MONTANA

GLACIER COUNTY

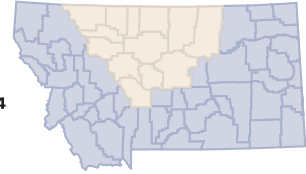
- Population (2010): **13,399**
- Population (2000): **13,247**
- Number of Households: **4,253**
- Median household income: **\$38,075**
- Unemployment rate: **11.2**

LIBERTY COUNTY

- Population (2010): **2,339**
- Population (2000): **2,158**
- Number of Households: **1,043**
- Median household income: **\$40,212**
- Unemployment rate: **4.0**

BLAINE COUNTY

- Population (2010): **6,491**
- Population (2000): **7,009**
- Number of Households: **2,843**
- Median household income: **\$37,034**
- Unemployment rate: **5.5**



*Note: 2007 population numbers are estimates; Unemployment rates are from December 2008.

TOOLE COUNTY

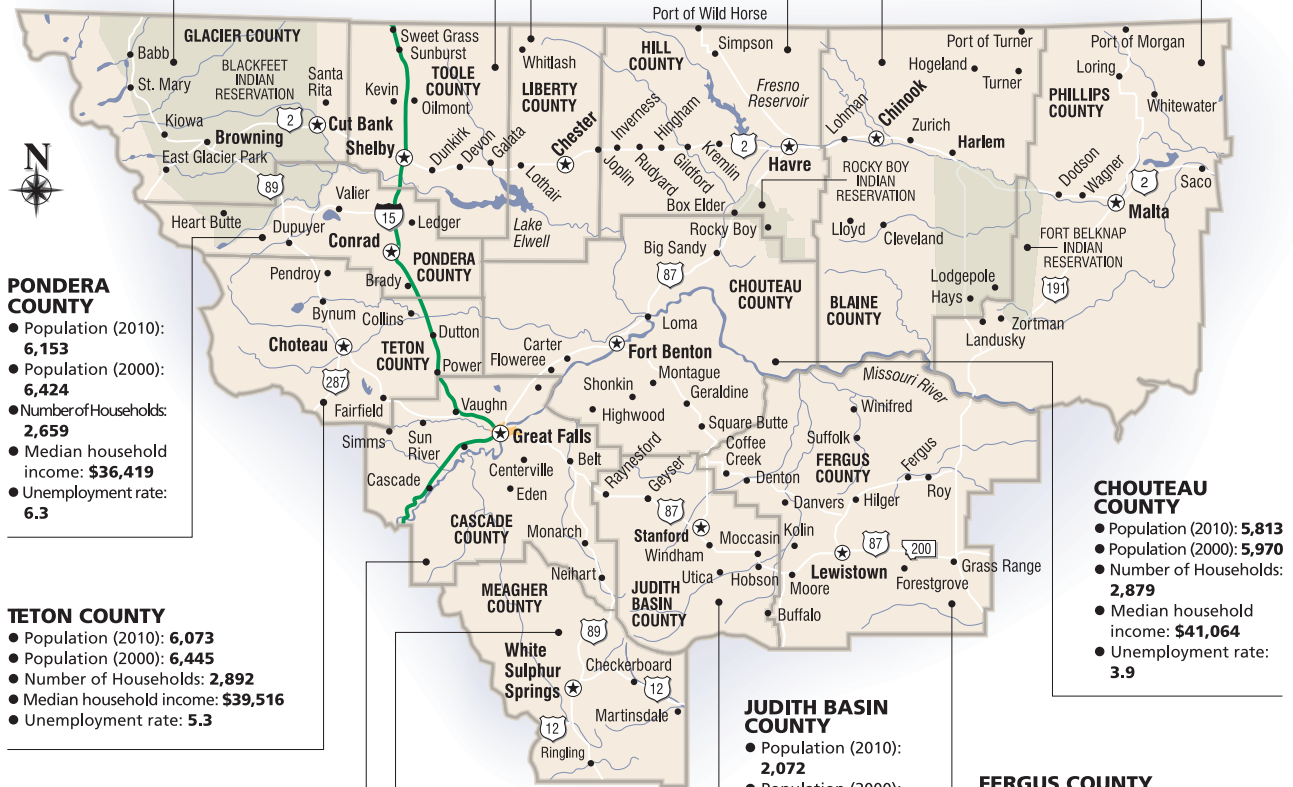
- Population (2010): **5,324**
- Population (2000): **5,267**
- Number of Households: **2,336**
- Median household income: **\$42,949**
- Unemployment rate: **4.3**

HILL COUNTY

- Population (2010): **16,096**
- Population (2000): **16,673**
- Number of Households: **7,250**
- Median household income: **\$43,606**
- Unemployment rate: **5.1**

PHILLIPS COUNTY

- Population (2010): **4,253**
- Population (2000): **4,601**
- Number of Households: **1,816**
- Median household income: **\$36,453**
- Unemployment rate: **5.1**



PONDERA COUNTY

- Population (2010): **6,153**
- Population (2000): **6,424**
- Number of Households: **2,659**
- Median household income: **\$36,419**
- Unemployment rate: **6.3**

TETON COUNTY

- Population (2010): **6,073**
- Population (2000): **6,445**
- Number of Households: **2,892**
- Median household income: **\$39,516**
- Unemployment rate: **5.3**

CASCADE COUNTY

- Population (2010): **81,327**
- Population (2000): **80,357**
- Number of Households: **37,276**
- Median household income: **\$42,389**
- Unemployment rate: **5.8**

MEAGHER COUNTY

- Population (2010): **1,891**
- Population (2000): **1,932**
- Number of Households: **767**
- Median household income: **\$31,577**
- Unemployment rate: **7.3**

JUDITH BASIN COUNTY

- Population (2010): **2,072**
- Population (2000): **2,329**
- Number of Households: **867**
- Median household income: **\$41,473**
- Unemployment rate: **4.1**

FERGUS COUNTY

- Population (2010): **11,586**
- Population (2000): **11,893**
- Number of Households: **5,836**
- Median household income: **\$37,607**
- Unemployment rate: **5.7**

CHOUTEAU COUNTY

- Population (2010): **5,813**
- Population (2000): **5,970**
- Number of Households: **2,879**
- Median household income: **\$41,064**
- Unemployment rate: **3.9**

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau;
Montana Department of Labor

Také Uda/Tribune

Notes: Number of housing units based on 2006 Census estimates; household income are estimated figures; unemployment rates are for December 2008. Figures for 2007 population are estimates.

ACCOUNTING FIRMS

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	MANAG. PART.	CPAS	SPECIALTIES
Anderson ZurMuehlen & Co.	21 10th St. S.	727-0888	Bob Bronson	19	Auto dealers, farm/ranch, estates, trusts, business valuation, tax preparation
JCCS (Junkermier Clark Campenella Stevens)	501 Park Drive S.	761-2820	Loran Stenslant	12	Tax, business advisory, wealth management, auditing
Douglas Wilson & Co. PC	1000 1st Ave.S.	761-4645	Randy Boysun	12	General auditing, tax accounting
Joseph Eve	410 Central Ave., Suite 414	727-1798	Joseph Eve	8	Tribal auditing/consulting
Loucks & Glassley PLLP	2 Railroad Square Suite A	761-8265	Troy Lindquist Robert Mau Debra Corn	6	Small business, taxation, nonprofits, auditing
Houston Helseth & Myers CPAs PC	704 1st Ave. N.	727-7691	Jim Helseth	4	Financial statements, income tax
Grabofsky Van Heel & Funderburk	Milwaukee Station, Suite 100	727-0322	Allen Funderburk	3	Tax accounting
Bloomgren Rivera & Co. PLLC	225 2nd St. S. Ste. 1	727-4004	Allen Bloomgren	3	Tax and real estate taxation
Darrell Watkins CPA	1601 2nd Ave. N., Suite 222	727-4348	Darrell Watkins	2	Taxation, bookkeeping, payroll and school accounting
Nicholas Bourdeau	P.O. Box 6363	727-8365	Nicholas Bourdeau	1	Forensic accounting, mediation
Tom Cave	203 Park Dr. North	761-4555	Tom Cave	1	Business and individual tax accounting
Donald L. Keith	600 Central Ave. Ste. 211	453-2727	Donald Keith	1	Farm/Ranch tax preparation, bookkeeping, accounting for businesses, payroll
Dwyer & Co.	300 4th St. North	453-2463	Michael Dwyer	1	Payroll, bookkeeping, tax preparation
Arlyn Johnson	3214 4th Avenue North	727-3930	Arlyn Johnson	1	Tax preparation, estate planning
Peterson and Associates	501 Central Plaza, Ste. 207	727-2661	Dick Peterson	1	Tax preparation and estate planning
Nett and Robison	1120 24th St. S.	761-6200	Georgen Robison Norene Nett	1	Tax preparations, accounting and consulting
Jordan and Associates Inc.	1219 Central Ave. Suite B	268-8610	Ryan Jordan	1	Individual and business accounting and Quickbooks
Swensen & Company	825 Central Ave. West	761-8852	Richard Swensen	1	Taxes, payroll, bookkeeping, payroll services
Wendy Weissman	1015 1st Ave. North, Ste. 102	454-8988	Wendy Weissman	1	Tax preparation (Quickbooks specialty)
Raymond Young	3300 7th Ste NE	761-6604	Raymond Young	1	individual taxation, planning & financial transactions

ATTORNEYS

NAME	PHONE	ADDRESS	MANAG. PART.	ATTYS.	SPECIALTIES
Jardine, Stephenson, Blewett, & Weaver PC	727-5000	300 Central Ave., 7th floor	Gary W. Bjelland	13	Full service
Ugrin, Alexander, Zadick, & Higgins PC	771-0007	2 Railroad Square, Suite B	Robert James	11	Litigation
Church, Harris, Johnson & Williams PC	761-3000	21 3rd St. N.	Ron Nelson	10	Full service
Smith, Walsh, Clarke, & Gregoire	727-4100	104 2nd St. S. Suite 400	Stephanie A. Hollar	8	Insurance defense
Davis, Hatley, Haffeman, & Tighe PC	761-5243	101 River Drive N., 3rd floor	Maxon R. Davis	6	Defendant litigation
Marra, Sexe, Evenson, & Bell	268-1000	2 Railroad Square, Suite C	Sara Sexe	5	General civil litigation
Linnell, Newhall, Martin & Schulke/Fair Claim	453-4500	120 1st Ave. N.	Norm Newhall	5	Workers compensation, personal injury
Lewis, Slovak, Kovachich and Marr PC	761-5595	725 3rd Ave. N.	Tom Lewis	5	Environmental claims, workers compensation, product liability, personal injury
Hoyt & Blewitt PLLC	761-1960	501 2nd Ave. N.	Zander Blewett	5	Trial work
Lanning, Harris and Conklin PC	727-9270	300 Central Ave, Suite 400	Allen P. Lanning	4	Civil trial litigation
Hartelius, Durocher & Winter	727-4020	118 6th St. S.	Channing Hartelius	3	Personal injury
Scott, Tokerud, & McCarty	727-2200	8 3rd St. N., Suite 507	Keith Tokerud	3	Business, estate planning
Falcon, Lester, & Schaff PC	727-5740	25 5th St. N., Suite 202	Randall C. Lester	3	Family, business law
Faure Holden Attorneys at Law, P.C.	452-6500	615 Second Ave N, Suite 201	Jean Faure	3	Civil trial work with emphasis on labor and employment
Smith Oblander, PC	453-8144	104 2nd St. S., Suite 101	Gregg Smith	2	Litigation, personal injury, business law
Thompson Law PC	727-0500	600 Central Plaza, Suite 201	Curtis G. Thompson	1	General practice
Luinstra & Young, PLLC	761-4800	104 2nd St. S. Suite 400	Greg Luinstra	2	Estate planning, business, real estate, construction
Conner and Pinski, PLLP	727-3570	520 3rd Ave. N.	Dennis Conner	2	Personal injury, insurance, product liability
Larsen Law Firm	727-2220	121 4th St. N., Suite 2J	Dirk Larsen	2	General practice
Best Law Offices	452-2933	425 3rd Ave. N	Michael Best	2	Trial work, business litigation
Lucero & George, LLP	771-1515	615 Second Ave N, Suite 200	Michael George	2	Trial attorneys with emphasis on personal injury
McKittrick Law Firm	727-4041	410 Central Ave, Suite 622	Timothy McKittrick	2	
Sutton & DuBois, PLLC	771-7477	1 5th Street North	Megan Sutton	2	General practice
Deschenes & Sullivan	761-6112	309 1st Ave North	Joe Sullivan	2	
Graybill Law Firm	452-8566	300 4th Street N	Benjamin Graybill	1	Trial attorney with emphasis on personal injury
Tremper Law Firm	761-9400	300 River Drive North	Glenn Tremper	1	
Taleff Law Firm	761-9400	300 River Drive North	Ward "Mick" Taleff	2	
Seidlitz Law Firm	727-1431	21 3rd Street N, Suite 412	John Seidlitz	1	Social Security, personal injury, medical malpractice
Olson Law Office, P.C.	727-6263	417 Central Avenue	Ken Olson	1	Criminal defense
Hoiness Law Office, P.C.	761-0996	401 3rd Ave North	Nathan Hoiness	1	Criminal defense
Hopkins Law Office	452-5363	410 Central Ave, Suite 608	David Hopkins	1	Family Law, personal injury, insurance claims, malpractice, wrongful death
Lawrence A. Anderson	727-8466	300 4th Street N	Lawrence Anderson	1	Medical negligence, personal injuries, employment-labor, consumer protection
Marcia Birkenbuel	761-1932	410 Central Ave, Suite 613	Marcia Birkenbuel	1	Family Law
Jeffrey S. Ferguson Law Offices	453-3275	410 Central Ave, Suite 515	Jeff Ferguson	1	Family Law
Barer Law Offices	771-8800	300 4th Street N	Michael Barer	1	Personal injury, medical negligence

ADVERTISING FIRMS

NAME	PHONE	ADDRESS	TOP EXECUTIVE	EMP.	KEY ACCOUNTS/SPECIALTIES
Wendt	454-8500	106 1st Ave. S.	Brenda Peterson	12	Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas, Davidson Cos., Glacier Country, Farm Credit Service, Pacific Steel and Recycling
Banik Communications	454-3422	121 4th St. N.	Carl Banik	11	Taco Johns, Travel Time RV, Moodie Implement, MDT, Benefis Health Foundation
Walker Design Group	727-8115	421 Central Ave.	Duane Walker	2	Print and Internet advertising and marketing, corporate identity and branding
Fleming Graphics	761-7887	510 1st Ave. N.	Ron Fleming	2	
Lodestone	761-0288	318 Central Ave.	Charles Fulcher	1	Quality Life Concepts, Montana State Fair, Great Falls Teachers Federal Credit Union
Inkfish Creative	360-9858	P.O. Box 2223	Joshua Rowe	1	221 Industries, Taco Treat, 3 Rivers Communications, Phoenix Core Solutions, Great Falls Development Authority

ARCHITECTS

NAME	PHONE	ADDRESS	TOP EXECUTIVE	ARCHITECTS*	SPECIALTY
L'Heureux Page Werner PC	771-0770	15 5th St. S.	Stephen L'Heureux	5	Health care, educaiton, correction, military, commercial
CTA Architects & Engineers	452-3321	219 2nd Ave. S.	Martin Byrnes	4	Commercial, government, edication, medical and retail
Hessler Architects	727-2757	12 6th St. S.	Marv Hessler	2	Commercial
Davidson Architecture	761-3334	117 2nd Ave. N.	Bruce Davidson	1	Laboratory, technology design
Nelson Architects	727-3286	621 2nd Ave. N.	Dale Nelson	1	Commercial, medical, residential, government
Gordon Whirry Architecture	452-4370	1912 4th Ave. N.	Gordon Whirry	1	University, commercial, residential
Fox Architects	727-7676	320 1/2 Central Ave., Ste. 3	Robert Fox	1	Medical, commercial, schools, residential
Davidson & Kuhr Architects PC	761-2277	7 2nd St. S., Suite 3	Gene Davidson	1	Light commercial, residential
Fusion Architecture and Design	205-0202	304 37th Ave. N.E.	Bill Stuff	1	Medical design

BANKS

NAME	BRANCHES	PRESIDENT	PHONE	DEPOSITS
Wells Fargo Bank Montana	5	John Koppelman	454-5400	324.6 million
First Interstate Bank	3	Bill Weber	454-6200	243.6 million
U.S. Bank	5	Chris Reiquam	455-1077	278.1 million
Mountain West Bank	2	Tom Mathews	727-2265	151.6 million
Stockman Bank of Montana	3	Adrian Doucette	771-2740	157.0 million
Belt Valley Bank	1	Richard Browning	277-3314	59.6 million
Prairie Mountain Bank	2	Laura Vukasin	268-0404	69.0 million
Stockmens Bank	1	Michael Moore	468-2232	26.9 million
Teton Banks	3	Mike Johnson	467-2531	154.0 million

CREDIT UNIONS

OFFICES	BRANCHES	ASSETS	PRESIDENT	PHONE	MEMBERS
1st Liberty	6	\$147.0 million	Steven Grooms	761-8300	21,500
Montana Federal	3	\$174.2 million	Wally Berry	727-2210	20,876
Russell Country	4	\$60.0 million	Bernard Neibauer	761-2880	10,509
Great Falls Teachers	2	\$81.7 million	Debra Evans	727-7300	9,360
Family First Federal Credit Union	1	\$12.6 million	Kathryn Briggs	727-7575	2,215

ENGINEERS

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	TOP EXECUTIVE	ENGINEERS*	SPECIALTY
Thomas, Dean & Hoskins	1200 25th St. S.	761-3010	Erling Jule	12	Water, structural, civil, geotechnical, survey, materials testing lab
Stelling Engineers Inc.	614 Park Drive S.	453-2564	Mitch Stelling	11	Civil, structural, water, waste water and site development.
GPD	524 1st Ave. S.	452-9558	Daniel Kempa	6	Mechanical, electrical systems
NTL Engineering & Geoscience, a Terracon Co.	1392 13th Ave. S.W.	453-5400	Gary Quinn, Ken Munki	7	Geotechnical, environmental, construction materials
CTA Architects & Engineers	219 2nd Ave. S.	452-3321	Martin Byrnes	6	Commercial, government, education, medical and retail.
NCI Engineering	4509 North Star Boulevard	453-5478	Jake Neil	7	Civil, water, environmental, wastewater treatment
L'Heureux Page Werner PC	15 5th St. S.	771-0770	Stephen L'Heureux	3	Health care, educational, corrections, commercial, military, residential
Lacy & Ebeling Engineering Inc.	10 12th St. S.	761-1088	Linda Geranios	3	Structural and industrial engineering
Big Sky Civil & Environmental	1505 14th St. S.W.	727-2185	Joe Murphy	4	Surveying, design, planning, environmental specialists
Dowl HKM Engineering	2701 16th St. N.E.	453-4085	Richard West	3	Civil engineering
Morrison & Maierle Inc.	1321 8th Ave. N., Suite 104	454-1513	Craig Nowak	2	Water, waste water, transportaiton and structural engineering, survey
AE2S/Advanced Engineering and Environmental	300 15th St. S.	268-0626	Nate Weisenburger	2	Water, waste water and storm water
Everson Cordeiro Engineering	12 6th St. S.	761-4057	Chris Cordeiro	1	Electrical and mechanical engineering
Woith Engineering	1725 41 St. S.	761-1955	Spencer Woith	1	Civil engineering and land surveying

* Licensed professionals

LODGING

LODGING FACILITY	PHONE	ADDRESS	MANAGER	ROOMS	RATES	AMENITIES
Best Western Heritage Inn	761-1900	1700 Fox Farm Road	Gary Sears	231	\$99.99 up	Convention/meeting space, catering, restaurant, casino, coffee bar, complimentary hot breakfast bar for guests
Holiday Inn	727-7200	400 10th Ave. S.	Robert Dompier	168	\$109 and up	Restaurant, pool, fitness center, wireless Internet, business center, lounge, casino, complimentary airport shuttle, 48-ft. waterslide, workout room, convention space
Hilton Garden Inn	452-1000	2520 14th St. S.W.	Laurie Price Manning	118	\$109 and up	Full service bar, restaurant with evening room service, pool, hot tub, fitness center, business center with remote printing, full banquet accommodations, wireless Internet, space, video conference capability, shuttle
Staybridge Suites	761-4903	201 3rd Street N.W.	Becky Edwards	113	\$119 and up	Complimentary breakfast, pool, guest laundry, free evening reception, guest market, kitchens, firepit, bbq grills, wireless internet, 24 hr business ctr, board room
Super 8 Lodge	727-7600	1214 13th St. S.	Jamie Street	112	\$62 and up	Continental breakfast, wireless Internet, Internet in lobby, laundry, complementary coffee
Townhouse Inns	761-4600	1411 10th Ave. S.	Scott Arensmeyer	109	\$85 and up	Pool, casino, meeting room, continental breakfast, hot tubs/sauna, wireless Internet, airport shuttle
The Quality Inn	761-3410	220 Central Ave.	Glenda Horner	104	\$59 and up	Restaurant, lounge, free wireless Internet, microwaves and refrigerators in rooms, outdoor pool, indoor parking, computer center in lobby
Extended Stay America	761-7524	800 River Drive S.	Tammy Serfes	104	\$70 and up	Full service kitchens w/cookware and utensils, cable TV, wireless Internet, free voice mail, iron/board, 24-hour laundry, nightly/weekly/monthly rates
Hampton Inn	453-2675	2301 14th St. S.W.	Laurie Price Manning	97	\$99 and up	Meeting rooms, pool, fitness center, Internet, shuttle, hot tub, complementary breakfast
La Quinta Inn & Suites	761-2600	600 River Drive S.	Ryan Carroll	92	\$85 and up	Pool, fitness and business centers, kitchenettes, Internet, wireless Internet, breakfast
Comfort Inn & Suites	455-1000	1801 Market Place Dr.	Malissa Hollan	88	\$99 and up	Internet, business and fitness centers, shuttle, breakfast, suites
Crystal Inn	727-7788	3701 31st St. S.W.	David Buckingham	86	\$89 and up	Indoor pool, wireless Internet, fitness center, Jacuzzi, free breakfast, airport shuttle
Holiday Inn Express	453-4000	1625 Market Place Dr.	Cameron McKnight	85	\$99 and up	Pool, 148' waterslide, complimentary hot breakfast, 24-hour fitness center
Malmstrom Inn	727-8600	7028 4th Ave. N.	Nick Drain	83	Under \$53.25	Audiovisual equipment
O'Haire Motor Inn	454-2141	17 7th St. S	Sandy Thares	72	\$72 and up	Pool, indoor parking, meeting rooms, wireless and complimentary high speed friendly, passes to Gold's Gym
Comfort Inn	454-2727	1120 9th St. S.	George Costello	64	\$77 and up	Breakfast, pool, spa, free wireless Internet, close to shopping and dining, pet friendly, passes to Gold's Gym
Fairfield Inn	454-3000	1000 9th Ave. S.	Jeff Beisecker	63	\$79 and up	Breakfast, pool, hot tub, Internet, laundry, business center, gym membership
Days Inn	727-6565	101 14th Ave. N.W.	Scott Shull	60	\$60 and up	Complimentary breakfast, meeting room, free high speed Internet, cable TV, fitness center
Great Falls Inn by Riversage	453-6000	1400 28th St. S.	Kelli Pandis	61	\$56 and up	Breakfast, fitness center, conference room
Motel 6	453-1602	2 Treasure State Dr.	Kathy Boschee	59	\$58 and up	Airport shuttle, Heritage Inn amenities
The Graystone Inn	452-1470	621 Central Ave.	M. Davidene Tait	50	\$50 to \$70	Takes small dogs, free wireless Internet, newly remodeled
Midtown Motel	453-2411	526 2nd Ave. N.	Peggy O'Hare	40	\$58 and up	Restaurant, free wireless Internet access
Best Resting Motel	268-8333	5001 River Drive N.	Chris Lum	33	\$60 and up	Kitchenettes, laundry, Internet, cable TV, coffee bar
Central Motel	453-0161	715 Central Ave. W.	Rupa Mehta	30	\$45 and up	Close to dining, laundry, continental breakfast
Imperial Inn	452-9581	601 2nd Ave. N.	Pravin Shah	30	\$49 and up	Cable TV, microwave, refrigerator, free breakfast, rooms with kitchens

PRINTERS

PRINTERS	PHONE	ADDRESS	EMP.	SPECIALTIES
Advanced Litho Printing	453-0393	226 9th Ave. S.	44	Commercial printing
Printingcenterusa.com	761-1555	117 9th St. N.	26	Four color printing, Internet file transfer, digital printing, short run printing
Staples	453-0900	207 NW Bypass	3	Scanning, desktop, business printing, Internet file transfer
Northern Directory Publishing	761-5234	25 Division Road	20	Directory publishing
Office Max	452-3836	1601 Market Place Dr.	3	Scanning, desktop publishing, photos
River's Edge	771-9899 or 771-9896	205 River Drive S.	15	Commercial printing, news tabloid, four color printing, magazines, mail services.
Allegra Print & Imaging	727-3291	300 5th Ave. S.	13	Business printing, signs, marketing support, vinyl vehicle wraps, Web and graphic design, T-shirts and promotional products
Associated Business Systems	454-2981	1100 7th St. S.	3	Business forms, all printing, computer repair
Licini's Print Shop	761-4622	506 2nd Ave. S.	6	Brochures, fliers, letterhead, forms, copying and color copying, legal documents
Blend's Copy Shop	454-3466	509 1st Ave. N.	4	Large-format printing, maps
Great Falls Builders Exchange	453-2513	202 2nd Ave. S.	2	Blueprints, construction drawings, building plans
American Solutions for Business	771-1176		1	Commercial printing, business forms, promotional products

REAL ESTATE OFFICES

OFFICE NAME	PHONE	ADDRESS	CITY	OWNERS	AGENTS	WEBSITE
Abode Realty	727-0352	1526 Central	Great Falls	Bob Sechena	2	aboderealtymt.com
American Realty Group	761-6700	1323 9th Ave. S. Suite 1	Great Falls	John Virgin	10	yourgreatfallshome.com
B&C Realty	727-4641	1100 14th St. S.	Great Falls	Len Reed	4	realestateofmontana.net
Belt Valley Property	277-4114	P.O. Box 588, Belt, MT 59412	Belt	Gary Keaster	5	beltvalleyproperty.com
Better Homes & Properties	868-9509		Great Falls	Stacy Good	1	stacygood.com
Exit Big Sky Realty	455-6034	527 18th Ave. NE Suite 1	Great Falls	Kathlee Kalthoff	5	exitbigskyrealty.com
Boland Agency	453-0371	104 2nd St. S. Suite 200	Great Falls	Gerald Boland	2	jerrybolandrealtor.com
By Owner Of Great Falls	454-0222	1111 14th St. S., Suite. B	Great Falls	Beth Duke	2	byownergreatfalls.com
Campbell Realty	799-1696		Great Falls	Dave Campbell	1	greatfallsots.com
Central Montana Realty	868-9805	1905 1st Ave. N.	Great Falls	Jerry Wilda	2	centralmontanaonline.com
Century 21 McDonald Realty	761-2811	3015 10th Ave. S.	Great Falls	Jerry Hedrick	9	century21greatfalls.com
Coldwell Banker The Falls Real Estate	727-6000	608 2nd St. S.	Great Falls	John Kunz	15	thefallsmt.com
Dahlquist Realtors	761-4081	500 Country Club Boulevard/2525 10th Ave. S.	Great Falls	Brett Haverlandt	33	dahlquistrealtors.com
Dustin Young & Company	216-3130	826 10th Ave. S.	Great Falls	Dustin Young	4	dustinyoungandcompany.com
Eklund Enterprises	727-8555	70 Dick Road	Great Falls	Russ Eklund	2	
ERA American Horizon Realty	727-3000	807 13th Ave. S.	Great Falls	Rick Wheeler	15	eragreatfalls.com
Faith Realty	727-4884		Great Falls	Dan Mann	3	
Gary Williamson	761-0373	P.O. Box 2800	Great Falls	Gary Williamson	1	
Goodbye-Owner	761-0001	9 12th St. N	Great Falls	Steve Gillespie	2	goodbyeowner.com
Gillespie Agency	761-0001	9 12th Street North	Great Falls	Steve Gillespie	2	missouririverproperties.com
Gourley & Company	453-5402	P.O. Box 6445	Great Falls	Rick Gourley	1	
Gray Realty	453-1163	2201 47th Ave. S.W.	Great Falls	Denise Gray	1	
Great Falls Realty	761-3518		Great Falls	Kelly Parks	3	greatfallsrealty.com
Holiday Realty	761-8630	750 6th St. S.W. Suite 203	Great Falls	Charlie White, John Bink, Joe Kraft	3	holidayrealtymt.com
Homestead Realty of Montana	788-7231	5500 Henry's Lane	Great Falls	Janice White	2	homesteadrealtymt.com
J&K Realty - Property Management	788-6844	1601 2nd Ave N. Suite 400	Great Falls	John, Kelly and Josh Lind	2	jkprpm.com
James Company Realty Inc., The	761-8865	212 5th St. S.	Great Falls	Jim Voegelé	1	jamescorealty.com
Macek Companies	727-5505	104 2nd St. S. Suite 100	Great Falls	Mark Macek	2	macekpm.com
McPartlin Realty	453-4388		Great Falls	Jeff McPartlin	1	
Montana Premier Real Estate	452-5310	102 4th St. N.	Great Falls	Katie Heitzman	5	montanasapremierrealte.com
Montana Ranch & Home Realty	965-3834	128 Sun Prairie Road	Great Falls	Gale Lee	1	
Montana Realty	453-2454	1812 10th Ave. S. Suite 1	Great Falls	Bill Pena, Rose Gehl	4	mtrealty.com
Northwest Realty Montana, Inc	453-5565	1701 2nd Ave N.	Great Falls	Bonnie Beuning	8	nwrealtymt.com
Professional Brokers of Great Falls	727-8222	P.O. Box 1725	Great Falls	Pat Goodover	1	
Property Shop	899-4000	2626 3rd Ave. S.	Great Falls	Bob Bartram	1	
Real Estate Solutions of Great Falls	770-3030	P.O. Box 6375	Great Falls	Melanie Loy	1	realestatesolutions.com
ReMax of Great Falls	761-1011	920 Central Ave.	Great Falls	Multiple Owners	14	remax.com
River's Trail Realty	452-5224		Great Falls	Peggy O'Brien	1	riverstrailrealty.com
Russell Country Realty	727-7100	PO Box 2625	Great Falls	Kyle and Tami Haynie	12	russellcountryrealty.com
Special Realty	452-1085	3303 Upper River Road	Great Falls	Shannon Wadsworth	1	
Swingley Realty	453-1111		Great Falls	Dave Swingley	1	
United Country Thomas & Company	268-1888	205 9th Ave. S. Suite 200	Great Falls	Tom Van Hoose	4	thomasncompany.com
Voegelé's Real Estate	453-4353	Holiday Village Mall	Great Falls	Lee Voegelé and Del Voegelé	2	

TOP PRIVATE EMPLOYERS

RANK	EMPLOYER	ADDRESS	BUSINESS TYPE	EMPLOYEES
1	Benefis Health System	1101 26th St. S.	Health care services	2,639
2	N.E.W. Customer Services Cos.	321 Central Ave.	Service plan service center	550
3	Walmart	702 Smelter Ave. N.E.	Retailer	540
4	Great Falls Clinic	1400 29th St. S.	Health care services	432
5	Easter Seals – Goodwill	4400 Central Ave.	Services for people with disabilities	383
6	Albertson's	2250 10th Ave. S./1414 3rd St. N.W.	Grocery store	260
7	Centene Corp.	2000 26th St. S.	Insurance services	260
8	D A Davidson & Co.	8 3rd St. N.	Financial services, travel	246
9	Missouri River Care and Rehabilitation	1130 17th Ave. S.	Nursing and rehabilitation	240
10	Town Pump	Various locations	Convenience stores, hotels, casinos	235
11	McDonald's	1721 10th Ave. S./2000 14th St. S.W./1710 3rd St. N.W.	Restaurant	220
12	Center for Mental Health	513 1st Ave. S.	Mental health services	220
19	University of Great Falls	1300 20th St. S.	University	216
13	Quality Life Concepts	215 Smelter Ave. N.E.	Services for people with disabilities	205
14	BNSF Railway	121 4th St. N.	Railroad	175
17	Sam's Club	401 Northwest Bypass	Retailer	165
15	United Materials	2100 9th Ave. N	Construction	163
16	Heritage Inn	1700 Fox Farm Road	Hotel	157
18	Park Place Health Care Center	1500 32nd St. S.	Nursing and rehabilitation services	150
20	Great Falls Tribune/Rivers Edge Printing	205 River Drive S.	Newspaper and printing	130

TOP PUBLIC EMPLOYERS

RANK	EMPLOYER	ADDRESS	TYPE	EMPLOYEES
1	Malmstrom Air Force Base	21 77th St. N.	Air Force	4,095 total, 3,405 in military
2	Great Falls Public Schools	1100 4th St. S.	Public School System	2,015
3	Montana Air National Guard	2800 Airport Ave. B.	National Guard	1,095 total, 358 full time
4	City of Great Falls	2 Park Drive S.	City government	538
5	Cascade County	415 2nd Ave. N.	County government	523
6	U.S. Postal Service	215 1st Ave. N.	Postal Service	159
7	MSU Great Falls	2100 16 Ave. S.	University	130

BUSINESS RESOURCE GUIDE

LICENSING, PLANNING

CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Michael Haynes, director

- » **Web:** greatfallsmt.net
- » **Address:** P.O. Box 5021, Great Falls, MT 59403
- » **Phone:** 771-1180

City Planning maintains zoning maps for the city of Great Falls and makes recommendations about zoning and annexation requests.

CASCADE COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING

Susan Conell, director

- » **Web:** greatfallsmt.net
- » **Address:** 415 3rd Street Northwest, Great Falls, MT 59403
- » **Phone:** 454-6905
- » **Fax:** 454-6903

The department administers Montana and Cascade County subdivision regulations, enforces floodplain regulations and overall land-use management for the county.

STATE AGENCIES

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY BUSINESS STANDARDS DIVISION

- » **Web:** discoveringmontana.com
- » **Address:** P.O. Box 200517, Helena, MT 59620
- » **Phone:** 406-841-2300

Administers building codes, business and occupational licensing, health care licensing and weights and measures.

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE CENSUS AND ECONOMIC INFORMATION CENTER

- » **Web:** ceic.mt.gov
- » **Address:** 301 S. Park Ave., Helena, MT 59601
- » **Phone:** 406-841-2740
- » **Fax:** 406-841-2731

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE SERVICES FOR BUSINESS ONE-STOP LICENSING

- » **Web:** onestoplicensing.mt.gov
- » **Address:** One-Stop Licensing, c/o Montana Department of Revenue, P.O. Box 8003, Helena, MT 59604
- » **Phone:** 406-444-6900

MONTANA SECRETARY OF STATE

Linda McCulloch, Secretary of State

- » **Email:** sos@state.mt.us
- » **Web:** sos.mt.gov
- » **Address:** P.O. Box 202801, Helena, MT 59620-2801
- » **Phone:** 406-444-2034
- » **Fax:** 406 444-3976

Oversees elections; maintains the official records of the executive branch and the acts of the Legislature; reviews, maintains and distributes public-interest records of businesses and non-profit organizations.

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR WORKERS COMPENSATION REGULATION BUREAU

- » **Address:** P.O. Box 8011, Helena, MT 59604
- » **Phone:** 406-444-7734

All construction contractors must register with the bureau, with some limited exemptions. The registration cost is \$53 for a two-year registration.

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE BUSINESS RESOURCE DIVISION FINANCE INFORMATION CENTER

- » **Web:** mtfinanceonline.com
- » **Address:** 301 S. Park, Helena, MT 59620
- » **Phone:** 406-841-2732
- » **Fax:** 406-841-2731

The Montana Finance Center provides summary information for the most significant financing resources available from state, federal, and local institutions.

MONTANA STATE FUND

- » **Web:** montanastatefund.com
- » **Phone:** 800-332-6102 or 406-444-6500
- » **Address:** 5 S. Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601

The fund provides employer liability insurance coverage for the legal obligation of an employer to pay damages because of bodily injury or death of an employee.

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE DIVISION

- » **Email:** uid.dli.mt.gov
- » **Address:** P.O. Box 8020, Helena, MT 59604-8020
- » **Phone:** 406-444-3783

EMPLOYER RESOURCES

GREAT FALLS JOB SERVICE WORKFORCE CENTER

- » **Web:** uid.dli.mt.gov
- » **Address:** 1018 7th St. S., Great Falls, MT 59405
- » **Phone:** 791-5800
- » **Fax:** 791-5889

Assist business with information on wages, employment law, labor market, and personnel matters. The Job Service Workforce Center also offers job training programs, employment-related computer access, proficiency testing and various employment related workshops.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS COUNSELORS

GREAT FALLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Brett Doney, president

- » **Email:** bdoney@gfdevelopment.org
- » **Web:** gfdevelopment.org
- » **Address:** 300 Central Ave. Suite 406, Great Falls, MT 59403-2568
- » **Phone:** 454-1934

The Great Falls Development Authority puts together incentive packages, markets and advertises Cascade County and finds local opportunities for businesses interested in Cascade County.

GREAT FALLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY HIGH PLAINS FINANCIAL

- » **Web:** gfdevelopment.org
- » **Address:** 300 Central Ave. Suite 406, Great Falls, MT 59403
- » **Phone:** 454-1934

High Plains Financial administers a number of business loan programs, including: a revolving loan fund for businesses in Cascade County; a loan program for business outside Great Falls' city limits in Cascade County and in Glacier Pondera, Teton and Toole counties; a microloan program for up to \$35,000 for businesses in Cascade, Glacier, Pondera, Toole, Teton, Judith Basin and Fergus counties; and Small Business Administration 504 program loans.

MONTANA PROCUREMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

- » **Web:** gfdevelopment.org
- » **Address:** 300 Central Ave. Suite 406, Great Falls, MT 59403
- » **Phone:** 454-1934
- » **Fax:** 454-2995

The center assists Montana businesses in obtaining government contracts, offering help in preparing bids, understanding forms and complying with regulations.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Rebecca Engum, director

- » **Address:** 300 Central Ave. Suite 406, Great Falls, MT 59403
- » **Phone:** 453-8834
- » **Fax:** 454-2995

The center offers free, confidential counseling, business training, and information to small business owners. Personnel assist with business plan preparation, business financial projections, market feasibility, break-even analysis, as lender liaisons and in finding industry information.

SERVICE CORPS OF RETIRED EXECUTIVES

- » **Address:** 100 First Ave. N., Great Falls, MT 59401
- » **Phone:** 761-4434

Counselors provide one-on-one counseling to people who want to start a business and to existing business owners who need assistance in long-range planning, expansion, or other business-related concerns.

GREAT FALLS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Steve Malicott, president

- » **Web:** greatfallschamber.org
- » **Address:** 100 1st Ave. N., Great Falls, MT 59401
- » **Phone:** 761-4434
- » **Fax:** 761-6129

GREAT FALLS BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

- » **Address:** 417 Central Ave. Suite 320, Great Falls, MT 59401
- » **Phone:** 727-5430

DOWNTOWN GREAT FALLS ASSOCIATION

- » **Web:** downtowngreatfalls.net
- » **Address:** 417 Central Ave. Suite 320, Great Falls, MT 59401
- » **Phone:** 453-6151

Continued on next page

BUSINESS RESOURCE GUIDE

Continued on previous page

MONTANA COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

- » **Web:** mcdc.coop
- » **Address:** 12 3rd St. N.W. Suite 110, Great Falls, MT 59404
- » **Phone:** 727-2864

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES

BEAR PAW DEVELOPMENT CORP. OF NORTHERN MONTANA

Paul Tuss, executive director

- » **Email:** ptuss@bearpaw.org
- » **Web:** bearpaw.org
- » **Address:** 48 2nd Ave., Havre, MT 59501
- » **Phone:** 406-265-9226
- » **Fax:** 406-265-5602

Bear Paw Development provides business loans combined with training and technical assistance, to residents of Hill, Blaine, Liberty and Chouteau counties.

SNOWY MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT CORP.

Kathie Bailey, executive director

- » **Address:** 613 N.E. Main, Lewistown, MT 59457
- » **Phone:** 406-535-2591
- » **Email:** cmrcd@lewistown.net

PHILCO ECONOMIC GROWTH COUNCIL

Courtney Moles, executive director

- » **Email:** philco@ttc-cmc.net
- » **Address:** P.O. Box 1637, Malta, MT 59538
- » **Phone:** 406-654-1776

NORTHERN EXPRESS TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

- » **Email:** shbnet@3rivers.net
- » **Web:** pnmshelby.com
- » **Address:** 112 1st St. S., Shelby, MT 59474
- » **Phone:** 406-434-5203
- » **Fax:** 406-434-2761

SWEETGRASS DEVELOPMENT

- » **Address:** 521 1st Ave. N.W., Great Falls, MT 59404
- » **Phone:** 406-727-5173
- » **Fax:** 406-454-6903
- » **Web:** sweetgrassdevelopment.org

PONDERA REGIONAL PORT AUTHORITY

Cheryl Curry, executive director

- » **Address:** 420 Main St. S., Conrad, MT 59425
- » **Phone:** 406-271-7237

STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- » **Web:** rurdev.usda.gov/mt
- » **Address:** P.O. Box 850, Bozeman, MT 59771
- » **Phone:** 406-585-2580
- » **Fax:** 406-585-2560

MONTANA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Webb Brown, director

- » **Email:** webb@montanachamber.com
- » **Web:** montanachamber.com
- » **Address:** P.O. Box 1730, Helena, MT 59624
- » **Phone:** 442-2405 Ext. 101

MONTANA MANUFACTURING EXTENSION CENTER

- » **Web:** mtmanufacturingcenter.com
- » **Address:** 302 South Park, Helena, MT 59601
- » **Phone:** 406-994-3812

The Montana Manufacturing Extension Center provides on-site assessment of business operations to help with practices for managing equipment, building, processes and people.

FEDERAL RESOURCES FOR BUSINESS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

- » **Address:** 2900 4th Ave. N. Suite 303, Billings, MT 59101
- » **Phone:** 800-321-6742
- » **Fax:** 406-247-7499

BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU

- » **Email:** info@spokanebbb.org
- » **Web:** spokanebbb.org
- » **Address:** 152 S. Jefferson Suite 200, Spokane, WA 99201
- » **Phone:** 800-356-1007
- » **Fax:** 509-838-1079

CONSTRUCTION TRADE ORGANIZATIONS

GREAT FALLS BUILDERS EXCHANGE

Krista Smith, manager

- » **Address:** 202 2nd Ave S., Great Falls, MT 59405
- » **Phone:** 453-2513
- » **Fax:** 727-7548
- » **Email:** gfbe@bresnan.net
- » **Web:** greatfallsplans.com

HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF GREAT FALLS

- » **Address:** 202 2nd Ave S., Great Falls, MT 59405
- » **Phone:** 452-4663
- » **Fax:** 453-0721

- » **Email:** hbagf@bresnan.net
- » **Web:** hbagf.org

MONTANA CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

- » **Address:** 1717 11th Ave, Helena, MT 59601
- » **Phone:** 406-442-4162
- » **Fax:** 406-449-3199
- » **Web:** mtagc.org

NORTH CENTRAL MONTANA BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL

- » **Address:** P.O. Box 1365, Great Falls, MT 59403
- » **Phone:** 406-452-1973
- » **Fax:** 406-453-9556

INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

MONTANA RETAIL ASSOCIATION

- » **Address:** 1645 Parkhill Dr, Suite 6, Billings, MT 59102
- » **Phone:** 406-256-1005
- » **Fax:** 406-256-0785
- » **Web:** mtretail.com

MONTANA RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

- » **Address:** 1645 Parkhill Dr, Suite 6, Billings, MT 59102
- » **Phone:** 406-256-1005
- » **Fax:** 406-256-0785
- » **Web:** mtrestaurant.com

MONTANA EQUIPMENT DEALERS ASSOCIATION

- » **Address:** 1645 Parkhill Dr, Suite 6, Billings, MT 59102
- » **Phone:** 406-256-1005
- » **Fax:** 406-256-0785
- » **Web:** mtequipmentdealers.com

MONTANA TIRE DEALERS ASSOCIATION

- » **Address:** 1645 Parkhill Dr, Suite 6, Billings, MT 59102
- » **Phone:** 406-256-1005
- » **Fax:** 406-256-0785
- » **Web:** mttiredealers.com

MONTANA AUTOMOBILE DEALERS ASSOCIATION

- » **Address:** 501 N Sanders, Helena, MT 59601
- » **Phone:** 406-442-1233
- » **Fax:** 406-449-0119
- » **Web:** mtada.com

MONTANA INNKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

- » **Address:** P.O. Box 1272, Helena, MT 59624
- » **Phone:** 406-449-8408
- » **Fax:** 406-442-8018
- » **Web:** montanainnkeepers.com

MONTANA TAVERN ASSOCIATION

- » **Address:** 920 E. Lyndale Ave., Helena, MT 59601
- » **Phone:** 406-442-5040
- » **Web:** montanatavernassociation.com

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the team behind your team



The Great Falls Clinic is Montana's provider of choice for everything from primary care to specialty care, routine visits to surgery. With locations in and around Great Falls you have access to a proven network of physicians, programs, services and outreach for all of your outpatient, hospital and ambulatory services for you and your family.

GREAT FALLS CLINIC SURGERY CENTER

The Great Falls Clinic Surgery Center has the prestigious distinction of being AAAHC certified. This is a national certification for surgery centers which the Great Falls Clinic Surgery Center has achieved and maintained since 1999.

The Great Falls Clinic Surgery Center is located on the Great Falls Clinic campus directly next to the Great Falls Clinic Specialty Center. Ambulatory surgical services include ophthalmology, orthopaedics, general surgery, urology, plastic surgery, endoscopy, ENT, podiatry, pain management, and gynecology. The Great Falls Clinic Surgery Center is available for outpatient procedures that do not require a hospital stay.

GREAT FALLS CLINIC MEDICAL CENTER

Our healing services provide you with the highest quality inpatient (or hospital) care available, from a team who is dedicated to delivering to you friendly, professional and personalized care. Our services include, but are not limited to:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| • Bariatric Services | • Hospitalist Services | • Oncology | • Pediatrics |
| • Cardiology | • Infusion Services | • Orthopedics | • Plastic Surgery |
| • Dental | • Laryngology | • Otology | • Podiatry Urology |
| • General Surgery | • Neurosurgery | • Pain Procedures | • Pulmonology |
| • Gynecology | | | |

Main Clinic · 1400 29th St. South · 406-454-2171

Great Falls Clinic Medical Center · 1411 9th St. South · 406-216-8000

Immediate Care Center · 1400 29th St. South · 406-454-7200

Northwest Clinic · 1600 Division Road · 406-268-1600

Specialty Center · 3000 15th Ave. South · 406-454-2171

Clinic Cancer Care · 3000 15th Ave. South · 406-454-2171

Surgery Center · 1509 29th St. South · 406-771-3500

www.gfclinic.com · www.greatfallsclinicmedicalcenter.com

Visit www.gfclinic.com for career opportunity information. The Great Falls Clinic is an equal opportunity employer (EO).